DC

ONE-STAR SQUADRON

MARK **RUSSELL**

STEVE **LIEBER**

DAVE **STEWART**

SUPERMAN-LEVEL *Service* *at* BIZARRO PRICES!

ONE-STAR SQUADRON

LIEBER AND STEWART

ONE-STAR SQUADRON

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ONE-STAR SQUADRON

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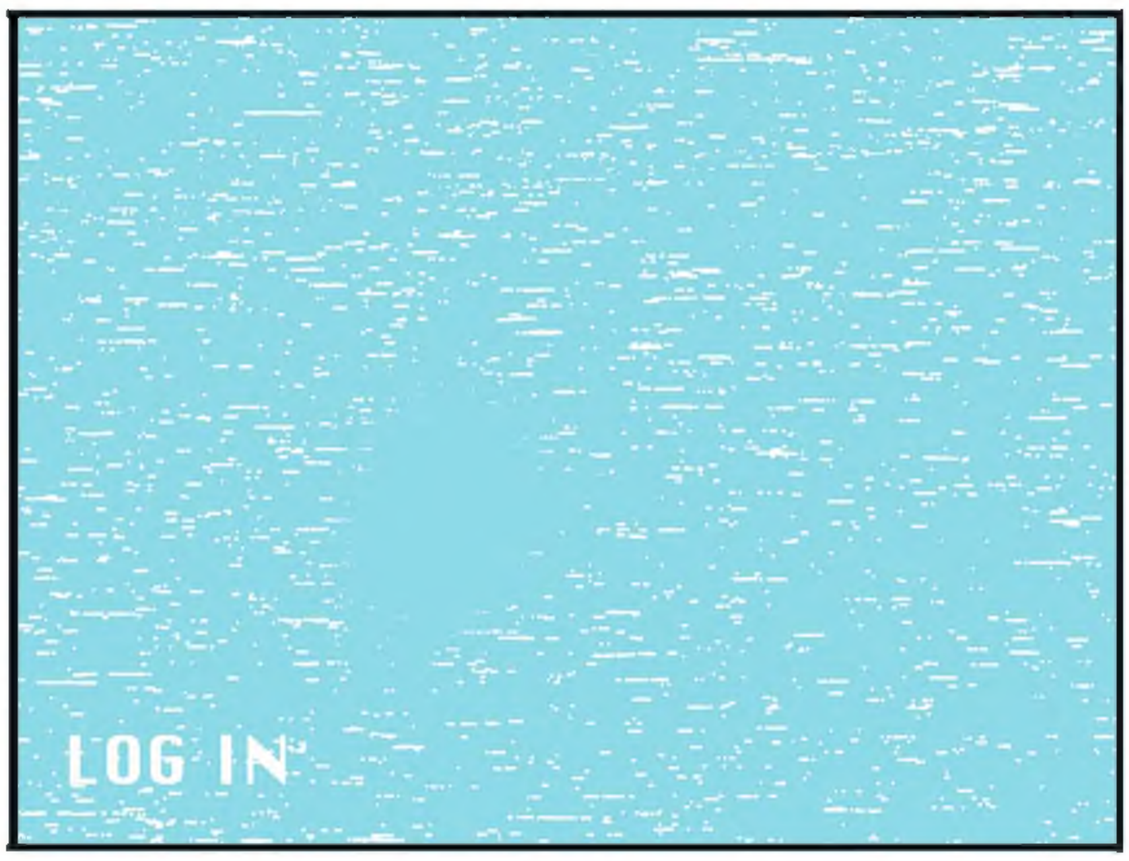
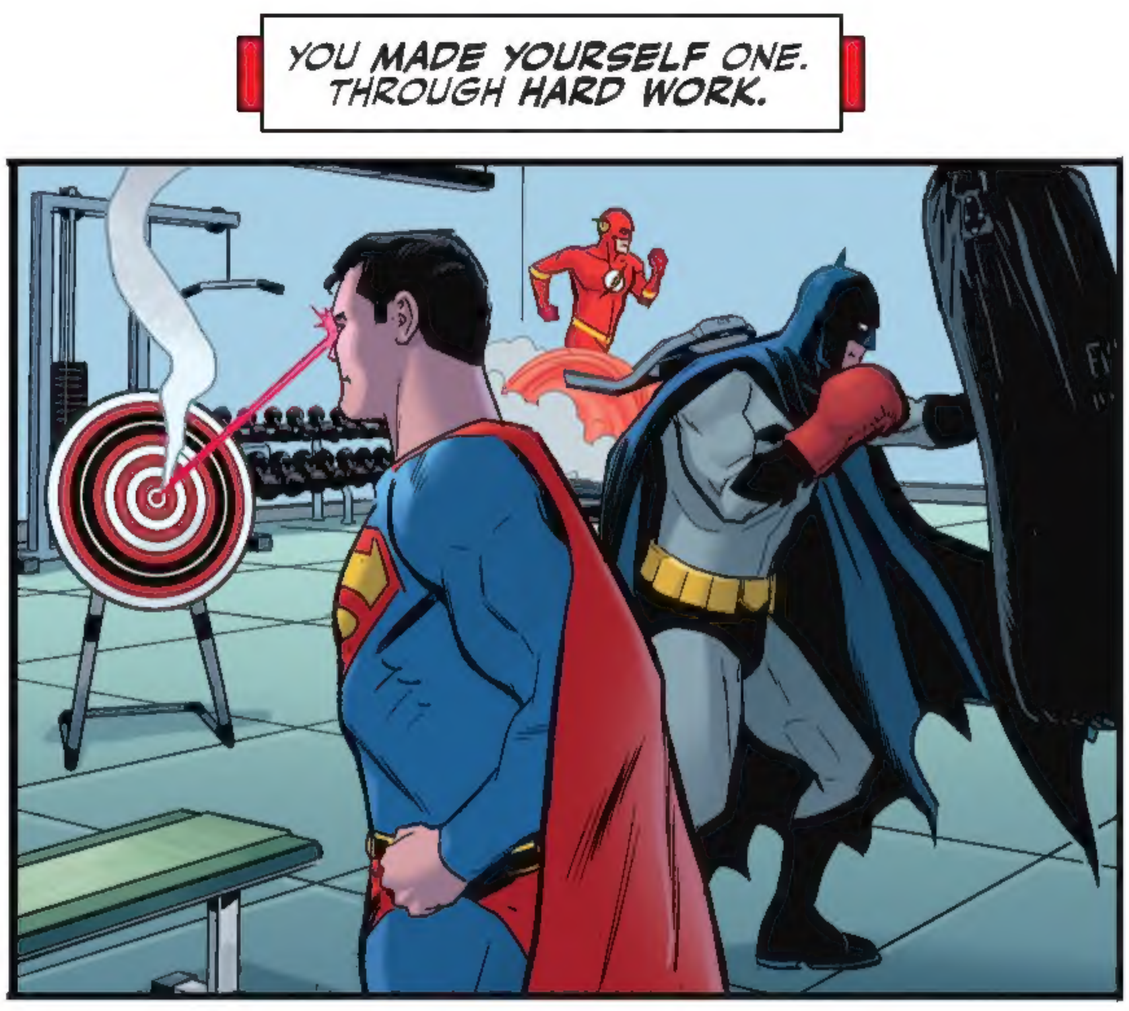
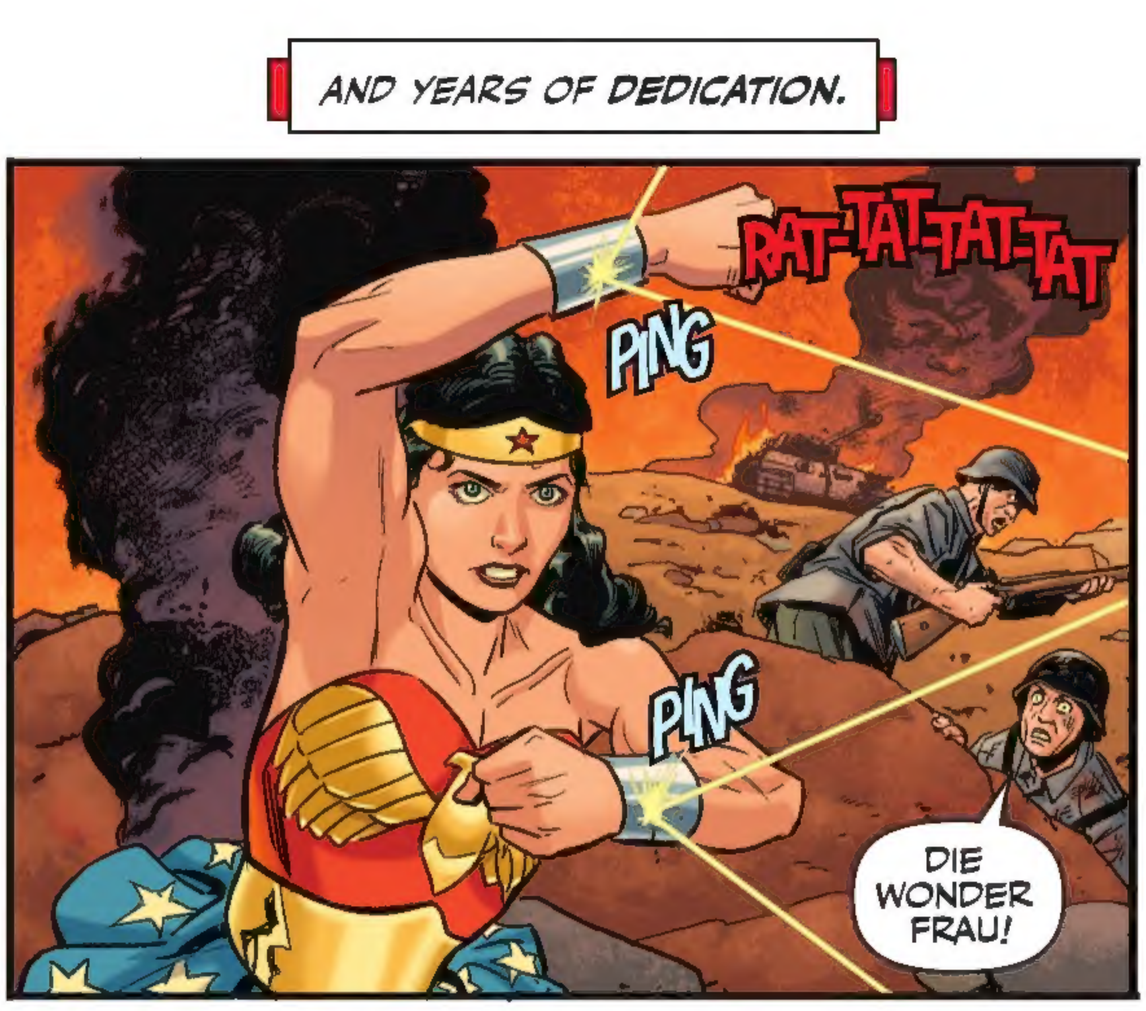
One-Star Squadron #1 cover
by Steve Lieber & Dave Stewart

4
HEROZ4u
You have:
1 new
request

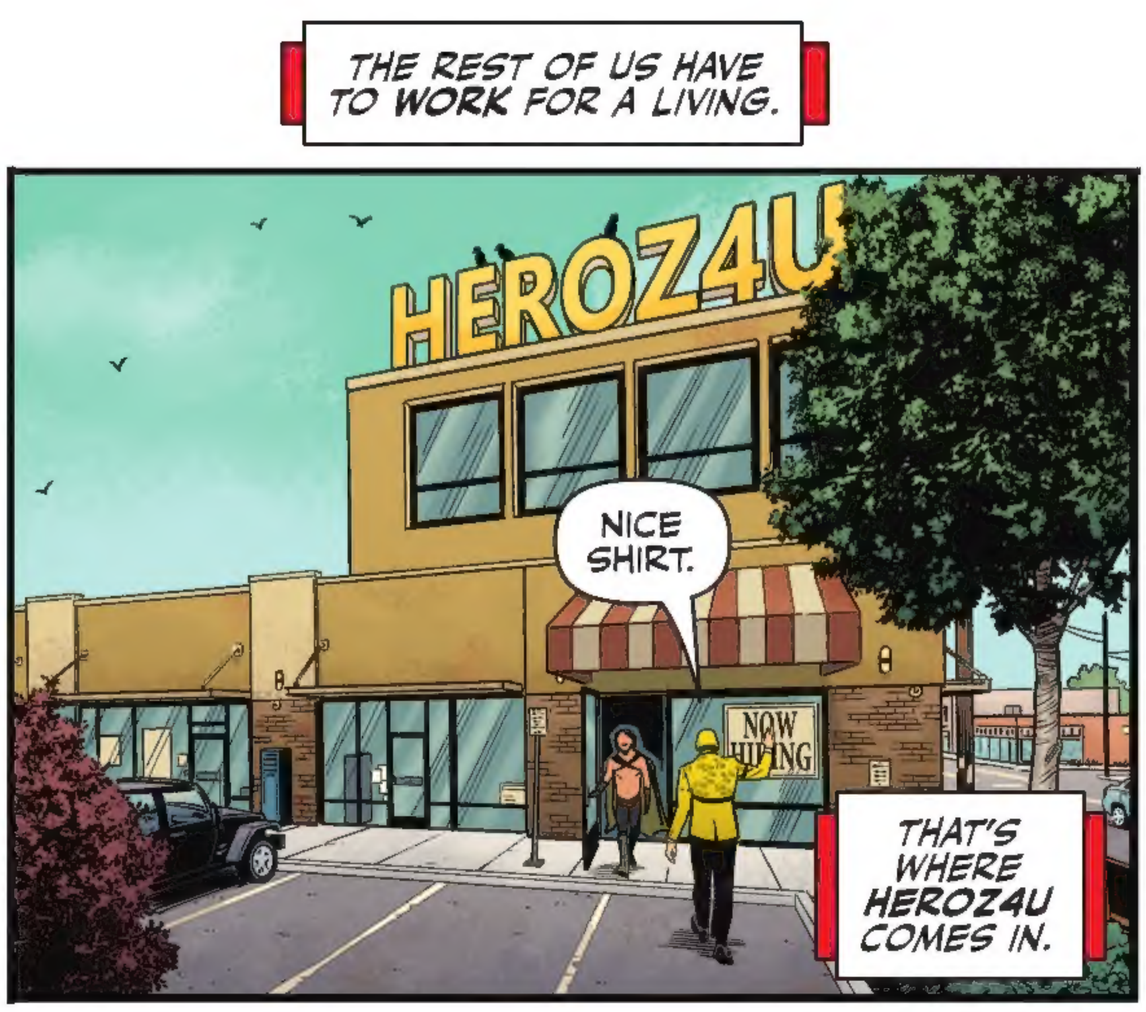

LOG IN

YOU WEREN'T BORN A HERO.
KAAAAA--
-BOOOOM!


YOU MADE YOURSELF ONE. THROUGH HARD WORK.


AND YEARS OF DEDICATION.
RAT-TAT-TAT-TAT
PING
PING
DIE WONDER FRAU!

BUT NOT EVERY HERO GETS THE JUSTICE LEAGUE TREATMENT.


THE REST OF US HAVE TO WORK FOR A LIVING.
HEROZ4U
NICE SHIRT.
NOW HIRING
THAT'S WHERE HEROZ4U COMES IN.

YOU MAY NOT BE **SAVING THE WORLD** EVERY WEEK. BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN YOU'RE NOT A VALUABLE MEMBER OF THE SUPERHERO COMMUNITY.

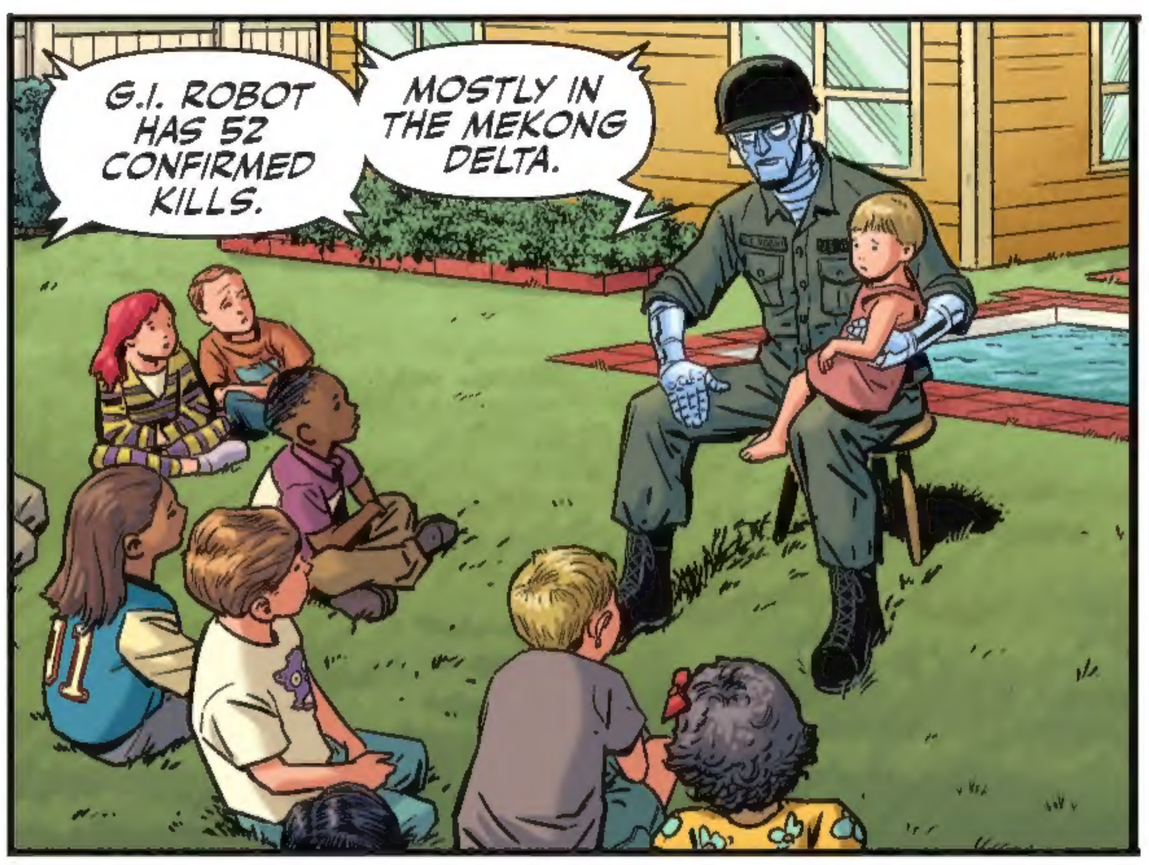
THAT DOESN'T MEAN YOU'RE NOT **NEEDED.**

HEROZ4U IS DEDICATED TO HELPING HEROES NAVIGATE THE NEW AND EXCITING GIG ECONOMY. AMONG OUR MANY **HEROTUNITIES** ARE...

...TELEMARKETING.

PERSONALIZED VIDEO APPEARANCES.

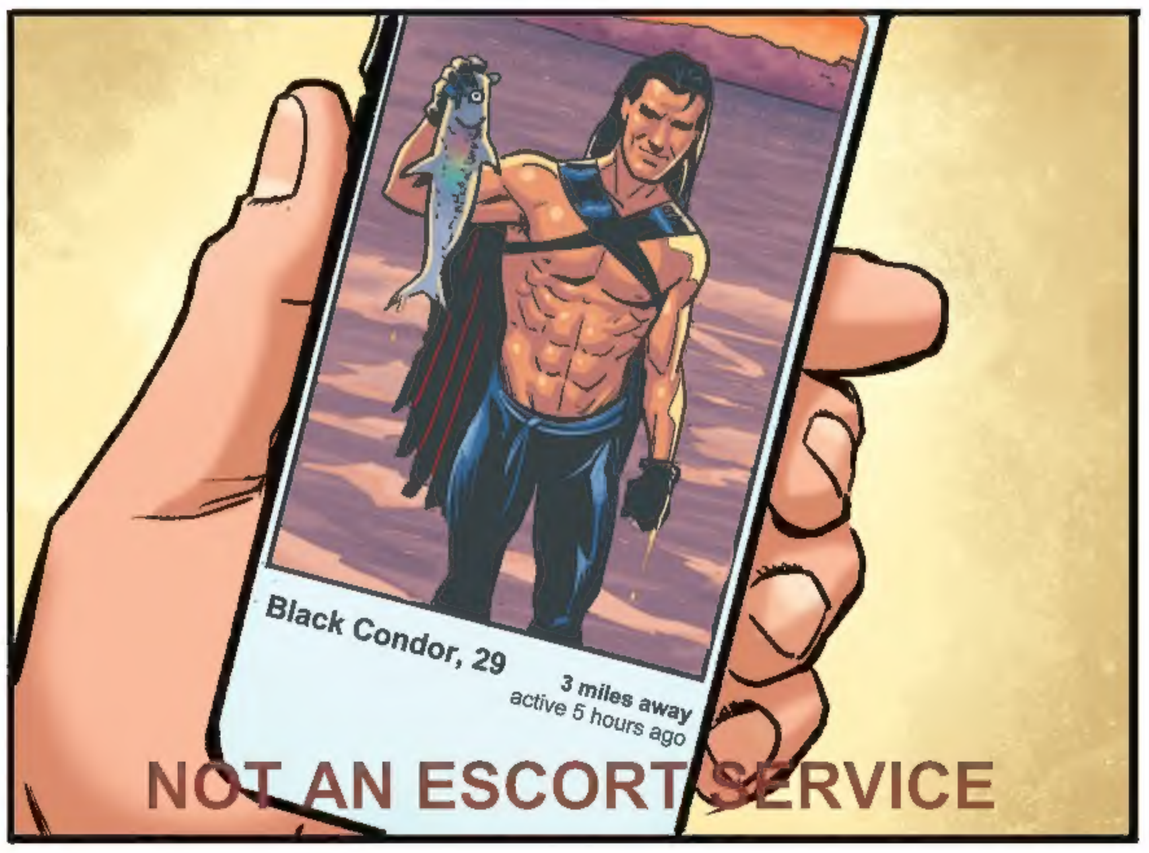
BIRTHDAY PARTIES AND PROMOTIONAL EVENTS.



AND, OF COURSE, DIGNIFIED SECURITY WORK.

WITH OUR NEW **HEROZ4U** APP--

--FINDING SUPERHERO WORK HAS NEVER BEEN **EASIER!**



SO IF YOU'RE A HERO WHO NEEDS A LITTLE EXTRA CASH OR IS LOOKING TO EXTEND THEIR CAREER...CONTACT **HEROZ4U** TODAY!

HEROZ4U

METROPOLIS COUNTY HOSPITAL.

BECAUSE **ONCE** A HERO, **ALWAYS** A HERO.

CONVENIENTLY LOCATED IN DOWNTOWN METROPOLIS.

SO WHADDAYA THINK?

YOU WANNA TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE HEROTUNITIES OR NOT?

HELLLOOOO?

WELL, YOU CAN'T STAY *HERE.*

SO WHAT'S IT GONNA BE, BEEFCAKES?

EVILDOERS BEWARE...

GOOD ENOUGH?

I'LL CALL A CAB.

LOOK, I CAN'T PUT YOU ON SECURITY FOR THE *ROYAL VISIT,* TERRY. THAT'S JUST THE WAY IT IS.

WHY NOT?

PEOPLE *ALREADY* DON'T TAKE US SERIOUSLY. THEY CALL US THE *ONE-STAR SQUADRON* BEHIND OUR BACKS.

AND SOMETIMES ON *YELP.*

HEROZ4U

EGAL HUT

METROPOLIS RESTAURANT

PUPPY MILL

Stone Cold Nails

TAXI

I CAN GIVE YOU WINDOW-JUMPER DUTY IN THE FINANCIAL DISTRICT.

YOU'D BE BACKING UP PLASTIC MAN.

SO I'D BE *SECOND BANANA.*

WHAT'S WRONG WITH BEING SECOND BANANA?

SOMETIMES YOU *NEED* TWO BANANAS.

C'MON, MAN. IS THAT THE *BEST* YOU CAN DO FOR ME?!

THAT'S THE BEST *ANYONE* CAN DO FOR YOU.

YANK

WHEN DID YOU STOP BEING A *HERO?*

I'M STILL A HERO.

TO *WHO...* ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE?

THIS *ISN'T RIGHT,* RED. I HAVE *SENIORITY* OVER ALMOST EVERY-ONE ELSE IN THE COMPANY! REMEMBER *THIS?!*

YOU GAVE ME THIS!

HEROZ4U

EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

WE DON'T GIVE OUT EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR AWARDS. YOU MADE THAT YOURSELF.

PLEASE TELL ME THIS IS ROCK BOTTOM.

THEY MADE A *MOVIE* ABOUT ME!

KATHUNK

TERRY, I WANT TO DO RIGHT BY YOU.

IT'S JUST HARD TO PLACE A HERO WHOSE POWERS ONLY LAST *ONE MINUTE.*

HAVE YOU TRIED THE APP?

YES! I GET *NOTHING* FROM IT.

I THINK I SEE THE PROBLEM.

HEROZ4U

MINUTE MAN

Customer rating

LOOK, JUST PICK SOME *LOW-HANGING FRUIT* FOR A WHILE. TAKE SOME MALL APPEARANCES. GET THOSE RATINGS UP.

THINGS'LL TURN AROUND. YOU'LL SEE.

WHY DID I *EVER* GET INTO THIS LINE OF WORK?

WHY DID *ANY* OF US?

WHY DID *YOU* BECOME A HERO, RED?

WHAT SEEMS LIKE A LIFETIME AGO...

FFWH

NOOOOO

TIME TO BLOW DOWN THIS HOUSE OF CARDS!

WHOA. OVER ALREADY?

YIKES. THIS ONE'S GOT CROWN SORES.

EMT

DAMN. HOPE THEY'RE INSURED FOR WIND DAMAGE.

YOU DID GOOD, *RED TORNADO.*

THANKS, SUPERMAN.

SOMETHING WRONG?

EVERY DAY, I TELL MYSELF HOW IMPORTANT THIS IS. SAVING PEOPLE. THOUGH IT MOSTLY SEEMS LIKE WHAT WE'RE SAVING THEM FROM IS EACH OTHER. SO IT MAKES ME WONDER, YOU KNOW, IF I'M DOING IT RIGHT.

I GUESS I'M STILL LEARNING WHAT IT MEANS TO BE HUMAN.

YOU AND ME BOTH.

ALL YOU CAN REALLY DO IS *SHOW UP* AND TRY TO LEARN ALONG THE WAY.

ARE YOU IN A *FLASHBACK?*

SNAP SNAP

ARE YOU EVEN *LISTENING* TO ME?!

TO BE HONEST, I DON'T EVEN REMEMBER WHY I BECAME A HERO.

MAYBE I THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO BE THE NEXT SUPERMAN.

MAYBE IT'S JUST *WHAT YOU DO* WHEN YOU'RE AN ANDROID WHO CAN CONTROL THE WEATHER.

OR MAYBE I WAS JUST YOUNG AND STUPID ENOUGH TO IMAGINE I COULD *CHANGE THE WORLD.*

NOT YET UNDERSTANDING THAT IT'S ALWAYS THE WORLD THAT CHANGES YOU.

WHATEVER. I'M TAKING THESE FRIES.

AFTER I BROUGHT DOWN THE ROYAL FLUSH GANG, I WENT ON AN UNBELIEVABLE ROLL.

WITHIN A *MONTH*, I'D BROUGHT DOWN FOUR OF THE FIVE BIGGEST GANGS IN METROPOLIS. I WAS THE TOAST OF THE TOWN.

I FELT *INVINCIBLE*

GOOD JOB, HONEY.

SOME BILLS CAME IN WHILE YOU WERE AWAY.

BUT I HAD BEEN *DEFEATED*

FINAL NOTICE

OVERDUE

PAY BY JUNE 3

I JUST DIDN'T KNOW IT YET

AND THAT'S WHEN I CAME TO WORK HERE

YOU EVER FEEL LIKE YOU'VE BEEN LIED TO?

LOOK WHERE WE ARE. WE'RE NOT IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO LIE TO.

UH...RED? YA GOT A MINUTE?

HANG IN THERE, BABY!

I THINK WE'VE GOT A PROBLEM.
HE WON'T LEAVE. OR DO MUCH OF ANYTHING.
WHAT CAN WE DO FOR YOU, FRIEND?
I DON'T KNOW.
THE TAXI JUST LEFT ME HERE.
WHERE DO YOU LIVE?
I...I DON'T REMEMBER.
A SPOUSE? ANY RELATIVES WE CAN CALL?
I DON'T KNOW.
LEGAL AID
DO YOU HAVE HERO INSURANCE?
I DON'T THINK SO.
POWER GIRL, I NEED TO TAKE CARE OF THIS.
YOU'RE IN CHARGE WHILE I'M GONE.
YOU CAN TRUST ME, RED.
IT'LL BE OKAY.
C'MON.
EVERYBODY BELONGS SOMEWHERE.
STILL HIRING

LATER.

YOU'RE HOME FROM WORK EARLY.

The Torna

OH. YOU BROUGHT A FRIEND.

WEATHER MONTH

THEY JUST DUMPED HIM ON OUR DOORSTEP, KATHY.

I FIGURED HE COULD USE SOME OF MY OLD CLOTHES UNTIL WE FIGURE OUT WHERE HE LIVES.

C'MON. LET'S FIND YOU SOMETHING A LITTLE LESS BREEZY.

I'M GOING TO SEE WHAT I CAN LEARN ONLINE.

GANGBUSTER

TYPE-TYPE TYPE-TYPE

Gangbuster

Early Life

"Gangbuster," born Jose Delgado, grew up in the Suicide Slum area of Metropolis to become a Golden Gloves amateur boxer by the age of 17. His gym was targeted by a protection racket, which resulted in the murder of his trainer, "Sugar Pop" O'Toole, causing Delgado to craft an alter ego in his quest for revenge.

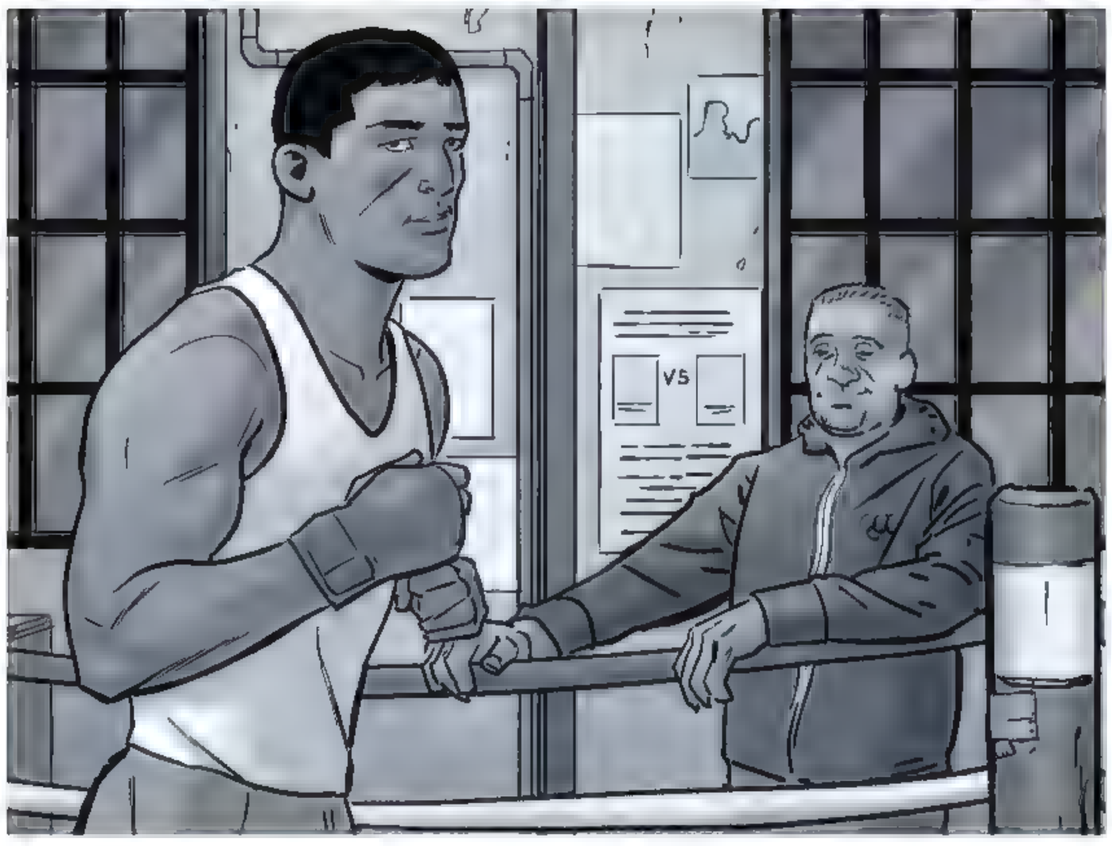
Gangbuster

KLIK

HERE WE ARE.

OH, GOOD. THERE'S A VIDEO.

TRAINED BY METROPOLIS LEGEND SUGAR POP O'TOOLE, **JOSE DELGADO** QUICKLY ROSE THROUGH THE AMATEUR RANKS, WHERE HE GAINED THE NICKNAME "IRON HEAD" FOR HIS ABILITY TO TAKE A PUNCH.



AFTER THE GANGLAND MURDER OF HIS MENTOR, DELGADO TOOK HIS FIGHTING SKILLS TO THE STREETS.

AND SOON BECAME KNOWN AS **GANGBUSTER.**

SCOURGE OF THE METROPOLIS UNDERWORLD.

AND HERO TO MILLIONS.

Page 4

Polls?

Planet

Judge Deals Royal Flush Gang 20 Years

Costumed thieves howl, break down in tears as verdict is announced

by Melba Manton

Lawyers for the Jack of Spades made a last-ditch argument that, as their client is a lower-ranking card, he should receive a lighter sentence, but to no avail. "The Jack is a vital and irreplaceable component of any Royal Flush," Judge Anderton ruled, "without which, all you have is an Ace high."

Lawyers for the King of Spades vow to appeal on the grounds that, as a monarch, their client enjoys diplomatic immunity, though "Spades" is not commonly recognized as a sovereign nation, but a card suit. Any atter... appeal on t...

ANYTHING YOU WANT FROM THIS DRAWER SHOULD BE FINE.

THOUGH I'D AVOID THE HAWAIIAN SHIRTS.

HOW ABOUT SOME CARGO PANTS? RED HASN'T WORN THESE WILLINGLY SINCE THE '90s.

THIS IS *HIM?* THE GUY WHO TOOK OUT HALF OUR GANG?

SUCH A *HERO.* HOW 'BOUT WE GIVE YOU A *METAL?*

GET OFF ME!

FLICK

WE'RE GONNA CUT YOU IN PLACES YOU DIDN'T KNOW YOU HAD!

HOW ABOUT A HOCKEY SHIRT?

HELLO?

HELLO?

OH MY GOD!

RDAAAAAGH!

RED! GET IN HERE!

SSSSMAAAASH

WHAT HAPPENED?!

I DON'T KNOW. HE JUST WENT *NUTS!*

I'M SORRY. I'M SORRY.

I'M SO SORRY.

I KNOW YOU'RE DOING THE RIGHT THING HERE, BUT I CAN'T HAVE THIS IN MY HOUSE.

IF...IF *TRAYA* HAD BEEN HOME...

I KNOW. I KNOW.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME.

IT'S OKAY. JUST GET DRESSED.

HEROZ4U

IF THERE'S ONE THING G.I. ROBOT UNDERSTANDS, IT'S THE POWER OF A **QUALITY** DIPLOMA.

OUR **SQUAD GOALZ** ONLINE COLLEGE OFFERS COURSES IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE, BOUNTY HUNTING, LAIR DESIGN--

YOU'RE A ***MACHINE,*** G.I.!

FINANCIAL AID IS AVAILABLE.

THAT'S GREAT. I'LL FORWARD YOU TO DELORES, WHO'LL TAKE YOUR CREDIT CARD INFORMATION. THOUGH WHAT SHE'LL DO WITH IT IS, FRANKLY, ANYBODY'S GUESS.

LOOKS LIKE THE HECKLER'S LANDED ***ANOTHER SALE!***

WHICH MEANS HE WINS THE ***WEEKLY BONUS!***

JULY SALES TO D

HECKLER	𝍸 𝍸 ||||
G.I. ROBOT	||||
FLY[illegible]G FOX	𝍸 |||
[illegible]OLDEDMAN	||
SLAPPA	𝍸 𝍸
DR POP	

STACK THAT CHEESE!

STACK THAT CHEESE!

GREAT. NOW WE'LL BE HEARING ABOUT IT ALL WEEK LONG.

LIFE IS LARGELY A ROTATION OF INDIGNITIES.

Ha

I'M LOVING THIS NEW *TAKE-NO-PRISONERS* ATTITUDE, HECKLER!

YEAH, WHATEVER.

HEY. CAN I ASK YOU A PERSONAL QUESTION?

YOU'RE A *KRYPTONIAN.* YOU HAVE *LEGIT* SUPERPOWERS...

THAT'S NOT A QUESTION.

WHAT I'M ASKING IS...

...HOW COME YOU'RE WORKING IN *THIS* DUMP?

WELL...

...HAVE YOU READ *MAXWELL LORD'S* BOOK?

IT CHANGED MY *LIFE.*

MADE ME REALIZE HOW MUCH TIME I'D WASTED FIGHTING *REALITY,* YOU KNOW?

REALIZE THE PRIZE

9 WAYS TO TAKE WHAT'S YOURS

"I'VE BEEN ON THIS PLANET FOR A LONG TIME, MOSTLY OF IT SPENT FIGHTING VILLAINS. AND FOR *WHAT?*

"IT CHANGED *NOTHING.* IF ANYTHING, THE VILLAINS JUST GET *STRONGER.*

LEXCORP

LEXTEL

LEX-MEX

LEX NEWS

LEXFLIX

BUT IT'S LIKE... MY SUPERPOWERS WOULD BE *USELESS* IF I'D ENDED UP ON A *MAGIC-BASED* WORLD.

SO WHY WOULD IT BE ANY DIFFERENT *HERE?*

ONLY THE EARTH ISN'T MAGIC-BASED, IT'S *MONEY-BASED.*

SO WHY FIGHT IT? IF YOU REALLY WANT TO CHANGE THINGS, DON'T YOU HAVE TO GO TO WHERE THE *POWER* IS?

YEAH, THAT SOUNDS LIKE A SMART CULT.

WHAT WAS *THAT* ALL ABOUT?

I DUNNO. SOMETHING ABOUT THE SELF-SERVING LOGIC OF POWER.

WASN'T LISTENING, TO BE HONEST.

9 WAYS TO TAKE WHAT'S YOURS

LATER. ACROSS TOWN.

I GOT AN ADDRESS FROM THE HALL OF JUSTICE, BUT IT'S PRETTY *OLD*. SO DON'T GET YOUR HOPES UP.

I'M REALLY SORRY ABOUT EARLIER.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. THE IMPORTANT THING IS WE FIND YOUR HOME.

SOMETIMES I...I JUST GET A *FEELING*...

AND... I DON'T KNOW... IT OVERCOMES ME.

HERE WE ARE.

HELLO?

HI, MA'AM. I'M REALLY SORRY FOR THE INTRUSION.

MY FRIEND HERE HAS SEVERE MEMORY PROBLEMS. SO I'M LOOKING FOR SOMEONE, ***ANYONE,*** WHO MIGHT KNOW HIM. KNOW WHERE HE'S SUPPOSED TO BE.

THIS WAS HIS LAST KNOWN ADDRESS.

SORRY. WISH I COULD HELP YOU.

I JUST MOVED HERE RECENTLY MYSELF.

BUT I COULD, YOU KNOW, TALK TO THE ***REALTOR.*** SEE IF THEY HAVE ANY INFORMATION.

THANKS. I WOULD APPRECIATE THAT. HERE'S MY CARD.

LET ME KNOW IF YOU HEAR ANYTHING.

WILL DO.

HEROZ 4u

Red Tornado
Manager

Birthday parties
Bar Mitzvahs
Light rescue work

redtornado@heroz4u.net

C'MON. WE'LL FIGURE SOMETHING ELSE OUT.

GOODBYE.

THIS IS JUST A TEMPORARY SOLUTION.

WE KEEP A COUCH WITH A FOLD-OUT BED IN HERE, JUST IN CASE. I PUT SOME LEFTOVER ENCHILADAS IN THE MINI FRIDGE.

CLEAN THE

IT ONLY TAKES A SECOND!

THANKS. HONESTLY, I...I DON'T KNOW WHAT I WOULD HAVE DONE WITHOUT YOU.

"I'M JUST SORRY IT'S COME TO THIS

"YOU KNOW, AS HEROES, WE'RE TOLD THAT WE'RE HERE TO *TAKE CARE* OF PEOPLE

"OFTEN FORGETTING THAT *WE'RE* PEOPLE

"THAT WE BROKE OUR LIVES TO DO THIS

"SO WE SUFFER ALONE."

I'M JUST GLAD THAT I FOUND THIS PLACE. WHERE HEROES LOOK OUT FOR EACH OTHER.

AND REGARDLESS OF HOW IT HAPPENED, I'M GLAD YOU FOUND IT, TOO.

I JUST DON'T KNOW WHAT I'D DO WITHOUT THIS JOB.

IT ONLY TAKES A SECOND!

ANYWAY, I'LL LET YOU GET SOME SLEEP.

GOOD NIGHT.

EVILDOERS BEWARE...

HERO2YU CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS.

I'M SORRY IT'S COME TO THIS, BUT I FELT I HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO CALL THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

IT'S JUST THAT...I HAVE GRAVE CONCERNS ABOUT RED TORNADO'S JUDGMENT. HE'S BEEN LEAVING THE OFFICE EARLY. HIS EMPLOYEES ALL SEEM TO RESENT HIM.

I...I THINK THERE MIGHT BE SOMETHING WRONG WITH HIS **PROGRAMMING.**

AND I THINK IT'S TIME FOR A CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP. TO BE LED BY SOMEONE WHO UNDERSTANDS HOW **BUSINESS WORKS.**

THESE ARE POWERFUL ACCUSATIONS, BUT WE THANK YOU FOR BRINGING THEM TO OUR ATTENTION.

WOULD YOU MIND...KEEPING AN EYE ON HIM FOR US?

YOU KNOW, LET US KNOW IF WE NEED TO GET RID OF HIM?

MEATWATER

ABSOLUTELY!

YOU CAN COUNT ON ME.

THAT'S GOOD TO KNOW, *POWER GIRL.*

HEROTUNITIES

MARK RUSSELL WRITER
STEVE LIEBER ARTIST
DAVE STEWART COLORIST
DAVE SHARPE LETTERER
STEVE LIEBER & DAVE STEWART COVER
STEVE PUGH VARIANT COVER
CHRIS ROSA ASSOCIATE EDITOR
BRITTANY HOLZHERR EDITOR
MIKE COTTON SENIOR EDITOR

SUPERMAN CREATED BY JERRY SIEGEL & JOE SHUSTER.
BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH THE JERRY SIEGEL FAMILY.

TO BE CONTINUED!

e-Star Squadron #2 cover
by Steve Lieber & Dave Stewart

LIEBER AND STEWART

4
HEROZTu
You have:
1 new
request

METROPOLIS. BAKERLINE DISTRICT.

HERE YOU GO, BRO.

DO YOU KNOW WHERE THE BUS STOPS AROUND HERE?

THE 23 STOPS AT FIFTH AND BESSOLO.

GO WITH GOD, MY MAN.

PSSST! WHATCHA WANT? WHATCHA NEEEED?

T-BAG GOT IT.

WHATCHA WANT? WHATCHA NEED? T-BAG GOT IT.

NO? OKAY.

→SIGH← YOU SHOULD'VE LEARNED HOW TO FLY A HELICOPTER, TREVOR.

HEY! OVER HERE.

BOOT

HEY, BRO. T-BAG GOT YA!

WHATCHA LOOKIN' FOR?

MIRACLO PILLS.

YO, BOSS. THEM PILLS IS *DANGEROUS.* THE THINGS I SEEN MIRACLO PILLS DO TO PEOPLE--

I'VE BEEN TAKING THEM FOR 25 YEARS.

WHY YOU NEED *ME,* THEN?

BECAUSE THE V.A. WON'T GIVE ME ANY MORE, *OKAY?*

YOU START OUT A GOVERNMENT TEST SUBJECT, THEY GET YOU *HOOKED* ON THESE THINGS, AND THEN *ONE LITTLE CONGRESSIONAL HEARING* AND THEY CUT YOU OFF!

LOOK, YOU GOT THE PILLS OR *NOT?*

YEAH, YEAH. HUSH YOUR DAWGS, BRO. I GOT 'EM.

THREE BILLS.

THREE HUNDRED BUCKS?!

I USED TO GET THEM AT THE PHARMACY FOR *FIFTY!*

I KNOW YOU'RE NEW TO THIS AND ALL, MAN, BUT DRUG DEALS IS SUPPOSED TO BE *QUIET.*

ALL RIGHT. ALL RIGHT.

LOOK, I'M A LITTLE SHORT, BUT I GOT *THIS.*

WHAT THE HELL'S *THIS?*

MY MOVIE.

WELL, THE MOVIE THEY MADE *ABOUT* ME. IT WAS RIGHT AFTER 9/11.

MINUTE MAN
FREEDOM ISN'T FREE

BROCK KENSINGTON

IT'S GOTTA BE WORTH *SOMETHING.* THAT WAS A *POPULAR MOVIE.*

IN WYOMING.

MAN, NO ONE BUYS *DVDs* ANYMORE!

I CAN'T EVEN PLAY THIS AT HOME!

PLEASE. I *NEED* THOSE PILLS. I GOT NOWHERE ELSE TO TURN.

WITHOUT THEM...I...I CAN'T *WORK.* I CAN GET YOU THE REST TOMORROW.

ALL RIGHT. I'LL GIVE YOU *A* PILL.

THANKS, BUDDY. YOU'RE REALLY HELPING ME OUT HERE.

TREVOR, MY DUDE, YOU *GOTTA* LEARN HOW TO FLY THAT HELICOPTER.

OUR SQUAD GOALZ ONLINE COLLEGE NOW HAS ON-SITE LEARNING AS WELL.

WE NOW OFFER CLASSES IN RAPPELLING, KRAV MAGA, LAIR MANAGEMENT--

GOOD MORNING, EVERY-BODY!

IF I CAN HAVE EVERYONE'S *ATTENTION?*

ANNOUNCEMENT, EVERYBODY!

WE GOT A BIG-TIME SECURITY REQUEST THAT'S UP FOR GRABS. RICH CLIENT NEEDS TWO HEROES TO ACCOMPANY HIM TO A MEETUP. *TRIPLE DOLLAR SIGNS,* PEOPLE.

PERSISTENCE

FREE

ANYWAY, IF YOU'RE INTERESTED, COME SEE ME IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM.

HEROZ 4U

CONFERENCE

MEETING IN PROGRESS.

RED, YOU *GOTTA* GET ME ON THAT SECURITY DETAIL.

I KNOW IT'S A BABYSITTING JOB, BUT THIS IS NO-NONSENSE WORK, TERRY.

THERE'S PROBABLY GOING TO BE *VILLAINS* THERE. IF SOMETHING GOES DOWN--

I'LL BE *FINE.* I GOT MY MIRACLO PILLS.

DON'T THEY TAKE A LITTLE TIME TO KICK IN?

I CAN BOB AND WEAVE FOR A FEW SECONDS.

AND ONCE THEY DO, I'M LIKE A *FLAMING TIGER* FOR A FULL MINUTE. C'MON. YOU COULD *USE* SOME MUSCLE LIKE THAT.

PLEASE, RED. I *NEED* THIS.

I CAN'T PUT YOU IN THAT KIND OF DANGER, TERRY. AND IT'S NOT JUST *YOU.*

I'D BE ENDANGERING YOUR *PARTNER.* AND PUTTING THE REPUTATION OF THE COMPANY AT RISK.

YOUR REPUTATION, YOU MEAN!

I'M JUST TRYING TO DO WHAT'S BEST FOR EVERYBODY.

LOOK, I ALSO GOT AN ASSIGNMENT FOR A *BIRTHDAY PARTY.* WHY DON'T YOU TAKE *THAT?*

4 HEROZ 4 u

Requested!

One superhero for child's birthday party! Must sign autographs and give an exhibition of superpowers.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

ACCEPT

YOU CAN HAVE IT BEFORE I OFFER IT TO ANYONE ELSE.

ANOTHER BIRTHDAY PARTY?! I'M SICK TO THE *MEAT* WITH BIRTHDAY PARTIES!

THEY BARELY PAY ENOUGH TO COVER THE *MIRACLO PILLS!*

WELL, IT'S WHAT I GOT.

BRRRRT

YOU'RE *SQUEEZING* ME, RED! I DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT YOU'RE *SQUEEZING ME!*

WHEN I MADE MY MOVIE, THEY *WARNED* ME THIS WOULD HAPPEN!

PLEASE DON'T BRING THE MOVIE INTO THIS.

THEY SAID, "WELL, ALL YOUR FRIENDSHIPS ARE OVER *NOW,* TERRY!" "EVERY HERO YOU KNOW IS GOING TO *HATE YOU* NOW THAT YOU GOT A MOVIE AND THEY DON'T."

BUT I NEVER IMAGINED *YOU'D* BE ONE OF THE HATERS, RED. *NEVER.*

I *QUIT!*

SLAM!

IS IT WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE?

NO. BUT I HAVE BUS TOKENS.

I'D LIKE TO THANK EVERYBODY FOR YOUR INTEREST IN THE SECURITY DETAIL.

CAVE DOG

HEROZ 4u

BUT I'VE DECIDED TO GIVE THE JOB TO *PLASTIC MAN* AND *FIREHAWK.*

AAWWWWWWW.

PLASTIC MAN *ALWAYS* GETS THE PRIMO GIGS.

IT IS NOT FAIR. G.I. ROBOT HAS KILLED MORE HUMANS THAN ANYONE IN THIS OFFICE.

HEY, YOU KNOW IF IT'D BEEN UP TO *ME,* I WOULD HAVE CHOSEN YOU TWO.

I'LL BE IN MY OFFICE. WITH THE DOOR LOCKED. PHONE'S STRAIGHT TO VOICE MAIL, SO DON'T TRY TO CALL ME.

FRANKLY, BETWEEN YOU AND ME, I THINK RED IS *SLIPPING.*

WHY DO YOU DO THIS RED?

YOU'VE BARRICADED YOURSELF IN HERE LIKE A SIX YEAR-OLD INSIDE A PILLOW FORT

HOW IS THIS DOING YOU ANY GOOD?

HOW IS IT HELPING ANYONE?

MIDVALE SUBURB.
PHILLY'S SEVENTH BIRTHDAY PARTY.

WHO HERE LIKES SUPERHEROES?!

YAAAAAAAY!

BECAUSE WE GOT ONE OF THE BEST...

...MINUTE MAN!

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! PERHAPS SOME OF YOU SAW MY MOVIE, *MINUTE MAN: FREEDOM ISN'T FREE?*

...STARRING *BROCK KENSINGTON?*

ACTUALLY... IT MIGHT'VE BEEN A LITTLE BEFORE YOUR TIME.

HEY. WHO HERE LIKES *SUPERMAN?*

YAAAAAY!

THEN YOU'RE GONNA *LOVE* THIS!

THAT'S ME AND SUPERMAN. TAKEN AT THE JLA SATELLITE IN 2012, I THINK? 2013?

AT THE ALL HEROES SUMMIT.

WE'RE BUDS! GREAT GUY. I MEAN, ***SOME PEOPLE*** SAY HE'S AN INSUFFERABLE PHONY, BUT WHO KNOWS?

11:52

Edit

YES?

HOW MUCH DID THAT PICTURE COST YOU?

I...WHAT? I DIDN'T HAVE TO *PAY HIM.*

WE'RE ***PEERS OF THE REALM!***

UH, COULD I HAVE A ***WORD*** WITH YOU?

I PAID FOR A SUPERHERO. WHAT'S THIS CRAP?

MY POWERS ONLY LAST FOR ***ONE MINUTE.*** SO WHEN DO YOU WANT IT?

WHAT?! I THOUGHT MINUTE MAN WAS JUST YOUR ***NAME.***

IT'S IN MY RIDER, CHAMP.

IT'S ***HIGHLIGHTED!*** YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE TO BE A STRONG READER!

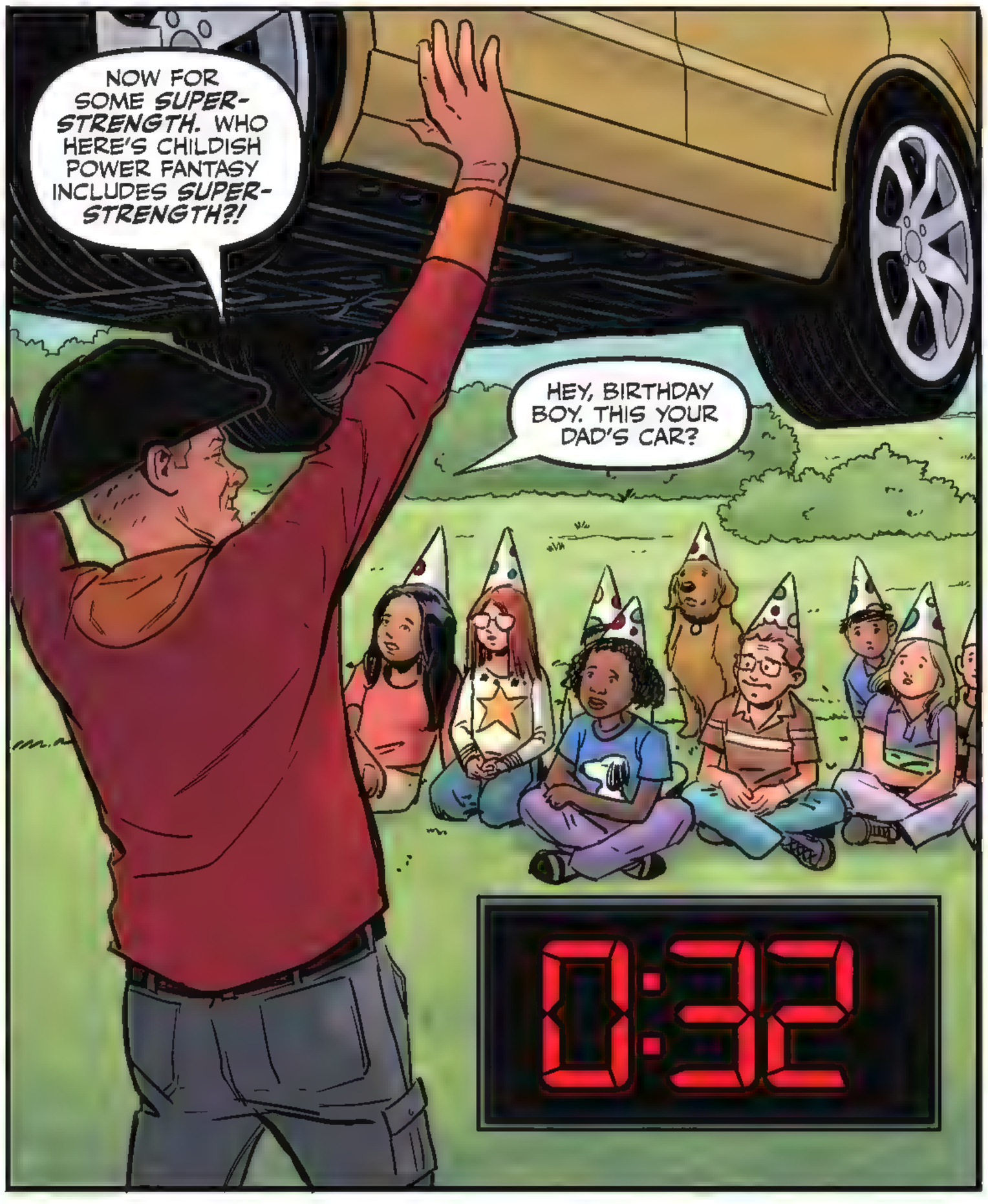
YOU JUST LOST YOUR TIP, BUDDY.

→SIGH←
ALL RIGHT. LET'S COOK THIS TURKEY.

WHO WANTS TO SEE SOME SUPERPOWERS?

OKAY, THEN!
YOU GET ONE MINUTE.
1:00
YAAAAAAAAY

SEE? JUST AS GOOD AS SUPERMAN.
WHOAAAA!


NOW FOR SOME SUPER-STRENGTH. WHO HERE'S CHILDISH POWER FANTASY INCLUDES SUPER-STRENGTH?!
HEY, BIRTHDAY BOY. THIS YOUR DAD'S CAR?
0:32

HE WON'T MIND IF I LEAVE IT HERE IN THE BACKYARD, WILL HE?

FOR MY FINAL TRICK, I WILL SHOW OFF MY *INVULNERABILITY.*

EVERYONE TAKE A HAMMER.

AS HARD AS YOU CAN, KIDS.

HA HA!

IT TICKLES!

1:13

THUD

OOF! HOLD UP, KIDS.

I THINK MINUTE MAN BROKE A--

OKAY, I JUST CALLED THE HEROZ4U OFFICE AND--

OH MY GOD!

WHOA! STOP!

I...I THINK HE'S HAD ENOUGH.

ARE THEY GONE?

T-BAG GOT WHAT YA WANT.

T-BAG GOT WHAT YA NEE-- OH NO.

SO, YA GOT THE REST OF MY MONEY?

YOUR MONEY?!

THAT MIRACLO PILL YOU SOLD ME ONLY LASTED FOR 45 SECONDS!

I ALMOST GOT *KILLED* OUT THERE!

HEY, MAN. IT'S A *STREET DRUG.*

YOU DON'T KNOW ME. I DON'T KNOW THE DUDE I BOUGHT IT FROM. HE DON'T KNOW THE PEOPLE WHO MADE IT. WHAT YA GET IS WHAT YA GET.

IT'S LIKE *CAVEAT EMPTOR,* MAN.

YOU KNOW, *BUYER BEWARE.*

WHAT?!

WHAT WE HAVE HERE IS, LIKE, AN *UNENFORCEABLE CONTRACT.*

AN ILLEGAL STREET DEAL IMMUNE TO THE NORMS AND STRICTURES OF LAW AND REASONABLE CONSUMER EXPECTATIONS.

OR AT LEAST, THAT'S WHAT THEY TAUGHT ME IN LAW SCHOOL.

NOBODY ASKED YOU!

BUTT OUT!

YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING TO RIP *ME* OFF?!

I'M A *HERO,* DAMMIT!

WHAT THE?! *HEY!*

OH, SO YA *ROBBIN'* ME NOW?!

THINK OF IT AS AN UNENFORCEABLE CONTRACT!

WHAT THE--

DO YOU MAKE THESE IN A *BATHTUB?*

UNBELIEVABLE.

MIRAKLO

I'M TAKING THIS *BACK!*

I AIN'T EVEN WATCH IT YET!

NOBODY CHEATS MINUTE MAN!

NOT COOL, MAN. NOT COOL.

WELCOME TO *LEXCORP!*

I'VE HEARD NOTHING BUT *GREAT THINGS* ABOUT YOUR LABOR MANAGEMENT APP.

CAN WE GET YOU SOME VITAMIN WATER?

I'M GOOD, BRO.

GREAT! LOOKS LIKE YOU BROUGHT YOUR OWN MUSCLE!

CAN'T BE TOO CAREFUL, I SUPPOSE.

TECHNICALLY, I DON'T *HAVE* MUSCLES. JUST THE TENSILE STRENGTH OF MY CHEMICAL BONDING.

HEY, THAT'S *SUPER!*

WHADDAYA SAY YOU ALL STAY *HERE* WHILE THE TWO OF US TALK *BUSINESS?*

SO TELL ME MORE ABOUT THIS WORKFORCE AGGREGATOR YOU'VE CREATED.

IT'S CALLED *CANNONFODDER.* CURRENTLY HAS THREE MIL USERS, BUT OUR CURRENT GROWTH PROJECTIONS--

SO THIS IS IT?

YEP. PRETTY MUCH.

WELL, *THAT* WAS EASY MONEY.

YEAH. THESE BOARDROOM MUSCLE GIGS ARE *GREAT.* I MEAN, I BASICALLY JUST STAND AROUND FOR A LIVING NOW, BUT I AIN'T COMPLAININ'.

LIFE HAS ALWAYS BEEN WITHOUT MEANING. WORK MERELY DISPELS THE ILLUSION.

SO WHAT EXACTLY IS HAPPENING HERE?

LUTHOR'S LOOKING TO BUY SOME SORT OF GIG-ECONOMY WORKSHARE APP.

HOW IS IT THAT HE DIDN'T *INVENT* THEM?

THIS IS THE THIRD DO-NOTHING SECURITY GIG I'VE GOTTEN THIS WEEK.

THAT'S GREAT! WHAT APP DO YOU USE?

HENCH.

HENCH™

SPORTSMASTER

Specialties: security, assassination, coaching youth sports

BOOK

WOW. THEY ONLY TAKE FIVE PERCENT?

YEAH, IT'S *NOT BAD,* ACTUALLY.

PRETTY SURE IT'S JUST FOR *VILLAINS,* THOUGH.

YEAH, BUT AT THIS POINT...

...IS THERE REALLY ANY *DIFFERENCE?*

VITAMIN WATER. NICE!

HEROZ4U
WELL, THIS IS A FIRST.

I'VE NEVER HAD ANYONE CALL TO ASK HOW THEY CAN GIVE A ZERO-STAR REVIEW BEFORE.
AFTER WHAT I WENT THROUGH AT THAT BIRTHDAY PARTY, THEY SHOULD BE PAYING ME DOUBLE.

TERRY, THEY NOT ONLY STOPPED PAYMENT ON THEIR CREDIT CARD...
...THEY CANCELED THEIR HEROZ4U ACCOUNT.
SMAK

WHY DON'T YOU TAKE A BREAK FROM HERO WORK? COME WORK FOR US HERE IN THE OFFICE. THERE'S ROOM ON THE SALES TEAM--
NO WAY. I CAN'T DO THAT, RED.

LOOK, I APPRECIATE WHAT YOU'RE DOING FOR ME. IT'S JUST THAT... I WORKED MY ENTIRE LIFE TO BE A HERO. I'M AFRAID ONCE I SET THE DREAM DOWN...
...IT'LL NEVER GET UP AGAIN.
PLEASE, RED. DO YOU GOT ANY HERO WORK? ANY-THING ELSE?

I DO.
BUT IT DOESN'T EXACTLY COME WITH A LOT OF DIGNITY.

I CHARGE *THREE DOLLARS* FOR AN AUTOGRAPH.

METROPOLIS CONVENTION CENTER

AUTOGRAPH ALLEY

PFFFFT. *REALLY?*

OKAY. TWO DOLLARS.

YOU'RE NOT EVEN THE ORIGINAL MINUTE MAN.

MINUTE MAN FREEDOM ISN'T FREE

MARK RUSSELL

LEX-MEN

TAP TAP

STEVE LIEBER

METROPOLIS COMIC CON GUEST

THEY MADE A *MOVIE* ABOUT ME!

IN *THIS* CENTURY?

SORRY. I THINK I'M GONNA *PASS.*

HEY. WHERE'D YOU GET *THOSE?*

THE V.I.P. ROOM. THEY GOT A PRETTY GOOD SPREAD, ACTUALLY.

AM I THE ONLY ACTUAL *SUPERHERO* HERE? I THINK I AM.

MAYBE THEY'LL GIVE ME MY OWN SPOTLIGHT PANEL.

METROPOLIS COMIC CON GUEST

WOW. THAT GUY WAS RIGHT. THIS PLACE IS *STOCKED.*

I SHOULD GRAB SOME EXTRA MEATBALLS TO TAKE HOME.

V.I.P. ROOM

METROPOLIS COMIC CON GUEST

WHEN YOU'RE ON TOP, YOU GET SOME OF THE SLOP.

UH. EXCUSE ME?

METROPOLIS COMIC CON STAFF

METROPOLIS COMIC CON GUEST

THIS LOUNGE IS FOR V.I.P.s ONLY.

I *AM* A V.I.P..

OKAY, BUT YOU DON'T HAVE THE V.I.P. *BADGE.*

I'M AN ACTUAL SUPERHERO.

METROPOLIS COMIC CON STAFF

NORMALLY, I WOULDN'T MAKE A BIG DEAL OUT OF IT, BUT WE JUST CHASED SOME WRITER OUT OF HERE.

IT'S STARTING TO PUT THE REAL V.I.P.s OFF.

BROCK?

BROCK KENSINGTON?

METROPOLIS COMIC CON STAFF

METROPOLIS COMIC CON GUEST

METROPOLIS COMIC CON V.I.P.

HE PLAYED ME IN THE MOVIE!

SIR, I'M GOING TO ASK YOU TO TAKE YOUR ILL-GOTTEN MEATBALLS AND LEAVE.

GUEST

01

THE MOVIE ABOUT ME!

WE GOT A 4-12.

00

01

METROPOLIS COMIC CON GUEST

BROCK! BROCK KENSINGTON!

ALL FOOD MUST BE CONSUMED IN THE V.I.P ROOM

OH, NOTHING. JUST A FAN.

METROPOLIS COMIC CON

FURTHERMORE, YOU ARE HEREBY BANNED FROM ALL FUTURE METROPOLIS CELEBRICON EVENTS.

DETENTION AREA

OKAY, BUT I NEED TO CONTACT SOMEBODY TO PICK ME UP.

NOT MY PROBLEM.

C'MON. DON'T I AT LEAST GET A PHONE CALL? EVEN IN *JAIL* THEY GIVE YOU A PHONE CALL.

CELEBRICON

METROPOLIS COMIC CON STAFF

DIAL *1 FOR AN OUTSIDE LINE

ALL RIGHT. YOU GET *ONE* PHONE CALL.

CELEBRICON

ALL RIGHT. ONE CALL.

ALL THE YEARS I'VE SPENT SAVING PEOPLE IN THIS TOWN. THERE'S GOT TO BE SOMEONE...

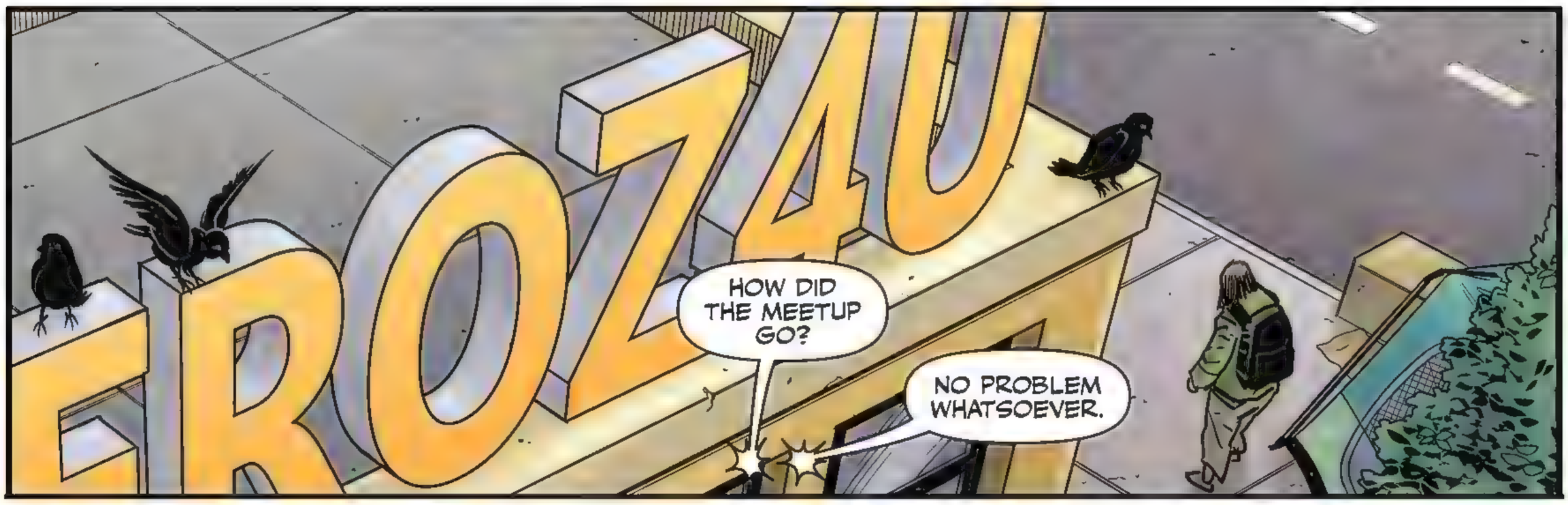
SOMEONE WHO STILL HAS MY BACK...

JUST GIVE ME A MINUTE. I'LL THINK OF SOME--

METROPOLIS COMIC CON GUEST

METROPOLIS COMIC CON GUEST

GUEST

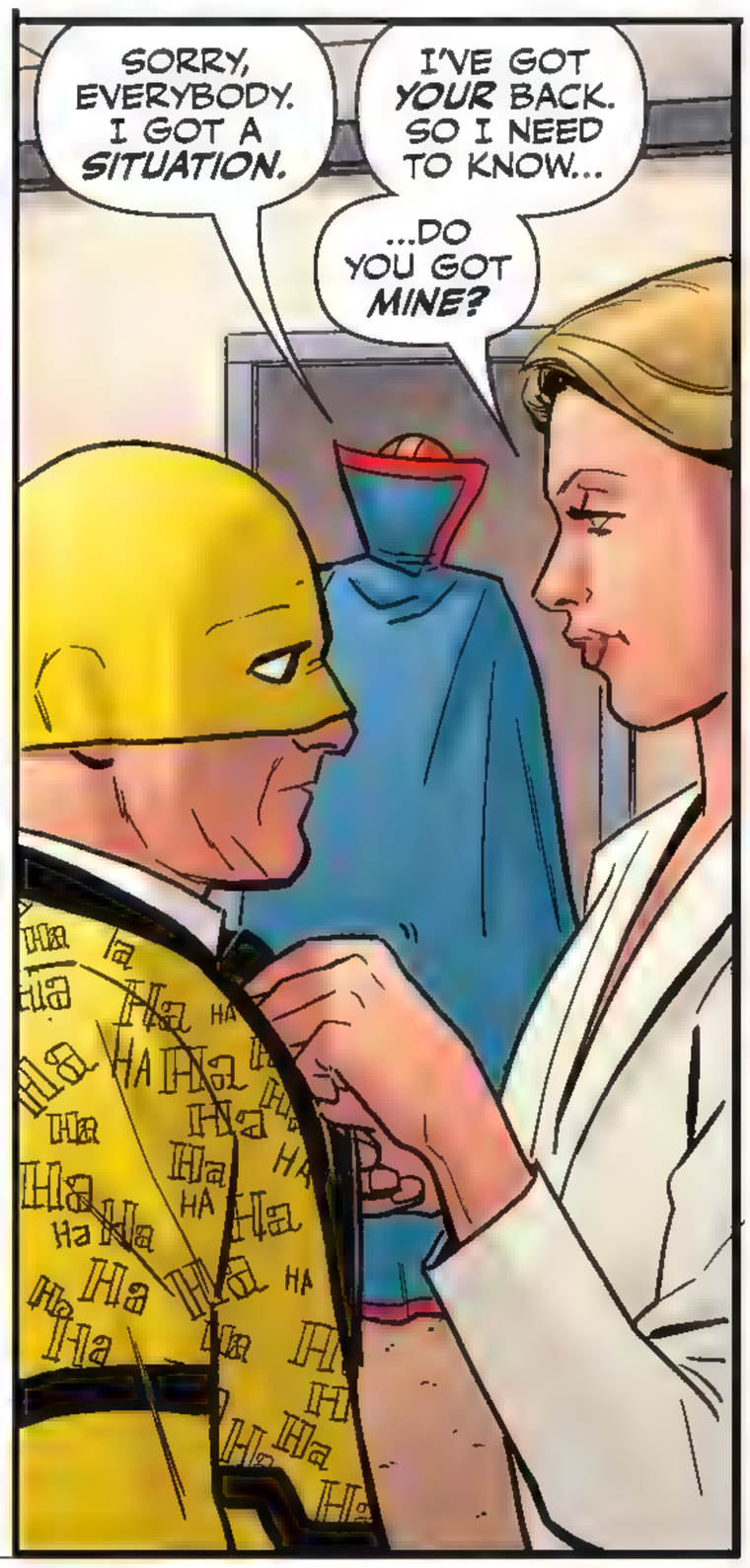

FROZ4U
HOW DID THE MEETUP GO?
NO PROBLEM WHATSOEVER.

PIECE OF CAKE.
I GOT A FREE VITAMIN WATER!

GREAT. I COULD'VE DONE THAT.
SO UNFAIR.
YOU KNOW, IF IT HAD BEEN UP TO ME, I WOULD HAVE CHOSEN YOU TWO.

HELLO?

TERRY?
SLOW DOWN! WHAT?
YES. I'LL BE THERE. I'M COMING NOW.


SORRY, EVERYBODY. I GOT A SITUATION.
I'VE GOT YOUR BACK. SO I NEED TO KNOW...
...DO YOU GOT MINE?

I NEED TO GET MINUTE MAN OUT OF COMIC BOOK JAIL OR SOMETHING.

POWER GIRL, YOU'RE IN--

WAIT. WHAT'S GOING ON?

IS THIS SOME SORT OF *PALACE COUP?*

WE ARE ALL *VERY UNHAPPY* WITH HOW YOU'VE BEEN RUNNING THINGS HERE, RED.

WE THINK IT'S TIME FOR A CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP.

AND THE *BOARD OF DIRECTORS* AGREES.

ROCK BOTTOM

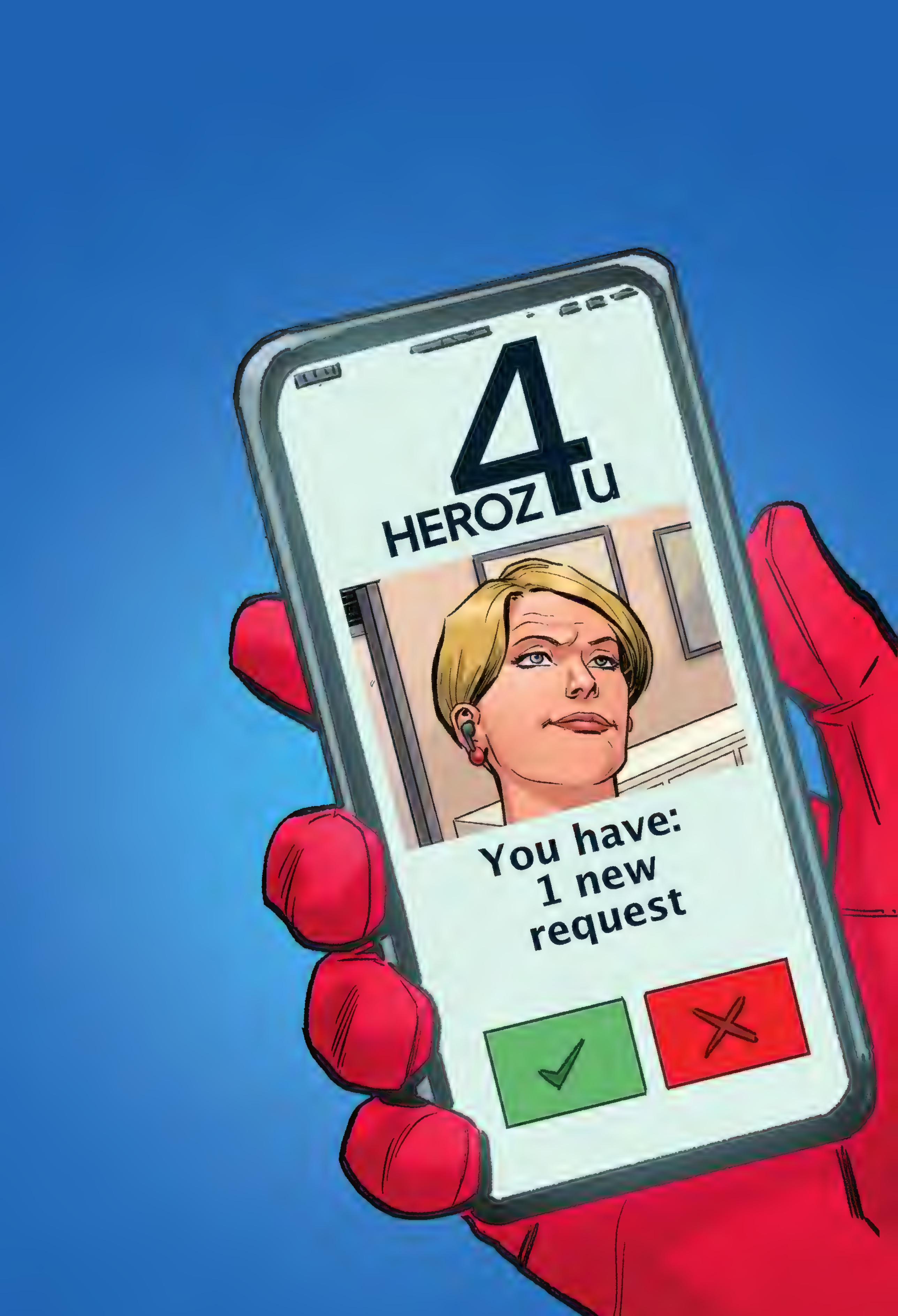
MARK RUSSELL-WRITER STEVE LIEBER-ARTIST DAVE STEWART-COLORIST DAVE SHARPE-LETTERER
STEVE LIEBER AND DAVE STEWART-COVER CHRIS ROSA-ASSOCIATE EDITOR BRITTANY HOLZHERR-EDITOR MIKE COTTON-SENIOR EDITOR

TO BE CONTINUED

Steve Lieber & Dave Stewart

LIEBER

HERO7


4
HEROZ Tu
You have:
1 new
request

CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS OF HEROZYU. METROPOLIS.

AS CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD, ALLOW ME TO SAY THAT YOU ARE *ALWAYS* WELCOME HERE.

ROOM AND BOARD

MARK RUSSELL-WRITER
STEVE LIEBER-ARTIST
DAVE STEWART-COLORIST
DAVE SHARPE-LETTERER
STEVE LIEBER AND
DAVE STEWART-COVER
CHRIS ROSA-ASSOCIATE EDITOR
BRITTANY HOLZHERR-EDITOR
MIKE COTTON-SENIOR EDITOR
SUPERMAN CREATED BY
JERRY SIEGEL AND JOE SHUSTER.
BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH
THE JERRY SIEGEL FAMILY.

AND WE'RE INTERESTED IN HEARING ANY *CONCERNS* YOU MIGHT HAVE.

THAT'S GOOD. BECAUSE I HAVE SOME.

SO I'M JUST GOING TO CUT TO THE QUICK...

I THINK TURNING *HEROES* INTO *EMPLOYEES* CHEAPENS HEROISM.

I DON'T BELIEVE YOU CAN COMMODIFY HELPING THE POWERLESS.

HELPING THOSE WHO HELP OTHERS

AND I DON'T BELIEVE HEROES WHO'VE DEDICATED THEIR LIVES TO SAVING OTHERS SHOULD HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT BEING THROWN OUT ONTO THE STREET.

IN SHORT, I THINK HEROZ4U WAS A *BAD IDEA* FROM THE START.

I HEAR YOU, *SUPERMAN.* I REALLY DO.

AND BELIEVE ME WHEN I SAY WE'RE ALL *BIG FANS.*

BUT THERE'S SOMETHING YOU'VE GOTTA UNDERSTAND--

--HEROZ4U IS THE ONLY HERO ASSOCIATION THAT TURNS A *PROFIT.*

WHICH IS THE *ONLY REASON* IT EXISTS.

suprr
eCape
Heroz4U
KrypTonight
SavUs
Trapt
Sidekix
AppApp&Away

AND WITHOUT IT, A LOT OF STRUGGLING HEROES WOULD BE OUT OF WORK.

MOST OF THOSE LOSERS WOULD BE OUTTA THE HERO GAME ALTOGETHER.

THAT'S... THE PROBLEM MASQUERADING AS THE SOLUTION.

AND IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT THE *MONEY,* SUPERMAN, BUT ABOUT CREATING SYNERGIES.

EVERYTHING IS CONNECTED.

MONEY ASIDE, THE HEROZ4U APP IS THE SINGLE QUICKEST WAY TO LET HEROES KNOW WHEN AND WHERE THEY'RE *NEEDED.*

SORTA LIKE A *9-1-1* FOR HEROES.

IT'S A MARKET-BASED SOLUTION FOR THE SHORTAGE OF SUPER-POWERED SERVICE WORKERS. IT'S HOW WE MAKE EFFICIENT USE OF A SCARCE RESOURCE.

MILK, EGGS, ADULT CONTEMPORARY CDs-- THIS IS HOW ***EVERYTHING ELSE*** WORKS, SUPERMAN. IT WOULD BE ***NAIVE*** TO EXPECT THE WORLD TO WORK DIFFERENTLY FOR HEROES, WOULDN'T IT?

MAYBE.

BUT THEN, I ALWAYS THOUGHT THE WHOLE REASON SOMEONE BECOMES A HERO...

...IS BECAUSE THEY CAN'T ACCEPT THE WORLD AS IT IS.

SLAM

THAT GUY'S GOING TO BE A PAIN IN THE BUTT, ISN'T HE?

ALMOST CERTAINLY!

WHAT ELSE WE GOT ON THE AGENDA FOR TODAY?

LOOKS LIKE THERE'S MORE ***CIVIL UNREST*** AT THE DOWNTOWN OFFICE.

WONDERFUL.

A PRETTY NASTY COMPLAINT LETTER ABOUT ***RED TORNADO!***

POWER GIRL SENT IT TO US, BUT IT'S SIGNED BY MOST OF THE OFFICE.

DAMN. THEY WANT HIM ***GONE.***

"CHAPTER FOUR: NAMING IT AND CLAIMING IT."

PEOPLE TALK ABOUT **DREAMS** AND **REALITY** AS IF THOSE WERE TWO SEPARATE THINGS.

LEVBURGER

AS IF REALITY WERE ANYTHING BUT THE **SMOKING BATTLEFIELD** OF OUR COMPETING DREAMS.

SALES LEAD

HECKLER	
GI ROBOT	
FOLDED MAN	
ING FOX	

AWWW SECOND PLACE?

DON'T WORRY, IT HAPPENS TO THE BEST OF US. AND, BY THE BEST OF US, I MEAN **ME.**

THE VICTOR BEING WHOEVER'S WISHES ARE THE LAST ONES STANDING.

SO IN TERMS OF TURNING YOUR AMBITION TO REALITY, THE ONLY REAL QUESTION IS...

...ARE YOU WILLING TO HOLD ON AS OTHERS' DREAMS COLLAPSE ALL AROUND YOU?

RED TORNADO MANAGER

WHAT AM I GOING TO DO WITH YOU, TERRY?

YOU SOMEHOW MANAGED TO GET BANNED FROM A *COMIC CON.*

I KNOW.

ACCORDING TO COMPANY RULES, I'M SUPPOSED TO *FIRE* YOU.

BUT I'M GOING TO GIVE YOU *ONE MORE CHANCE.*

THANK YOU, RED. I KNOW I DON'T DESERVE IT. BUT THANK YOU.

BUT, SPEAKING AS A *FRIEND,* I THINK YOU NEED TO GET OFF THE MIRACLO PILLS.

I KNOW.

I'M LIVING A *LIE.*

TAP TAP

BUT WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN IT'S THE LIE THAT KEEPS YOU ALIVE?

HERE.

WHAT'S THIS?

THEY ASKED SPECIFICALLY FOR *YOU.* ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS SHOW UP AND SIGN A FEW AUTOGRAPHS.

METROPOLIS SEASHELLS & NAUTICAL SUPPLY

GRAND OPENING

AHOY, LANDLUBBERS!

Ye are hereby invited to dine at the captain's table. Free fish sticks and ship's biscuit for all who brave the journey. Seashells, driftwood sculptures, and other treasures of the sea, 50% off. The dark of the deep shall someday claim us all. But, until then, there be deals to be had.

SPECIAL GUESTS!

SEA SHANTIES!

PRIZES!

YOU STILL GOT FANS OUT THERE, MAN.

I KNOW YOU'D RATHER BE DOING HERO WORK, TERRY.

SHOW UP TO THIS THING, DO A GOOD JOB, AND WE'LL TALK.

OKAY, I WILL.

THANK YOU, RED.

THIS ISN'T WHAT ANY OF THEM HAD IN MIND WHEN THEY BECAME A HERO

HEY, BUDDY! I KNOW YOU'RE A *GREAT SALESMAN* WHEN YOU WANT TO BE. AND WE ALL *LOVE* SEEING YOUR SMILE IN THE MORNING...

...SO WE'D REALLY HATE TO *LOSE YOU* BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T TURN THOSE NUMBERS AROUND.

HOW DO YOU MANAGE TO BE RUTHLESS AND INFANTILIZING AT THE *SAME TIME?!*

WE'D ALL ACCEPTED THE RISKS OF VIOLENCE AND DEATH AS THE POTENTIAL PRICE OF DOING THE JOB

BUT SOMEWHERE ALONG THE LINE THE DANGER OF DEATH WAS REPLACED BY THE DULL AND ENIGMATIC THREAT OF BEING FIRED OF SIMPLY BECOMING USELESS

INSTEAD OF SACRIFICING OURSELVES FOR A CAUSE WE WERE SIMPLY STOLEN FROM OURSELVES

AND THOUGH WE STILL LIVE WITH THE DANGER, THE FEAR

IT'S NOT THE FEAR WE'D HOPED FOR

RED TORNADO MANAGER

Ha Ha Ha

SOMEWHERE OFF THE COAST OF IRELAND.

MOTHER MARY! HOPE I'M NOT TOO LATE!

AH! THERE SHE BE!

HELP!

BLEEDIN' BISHOPS, THERE BE A WHOLE LOTTA YOU, AREN'T THERE?

HELP ME AS WELL!

AWWW, WHAT IN GRAPES IS IT NOW?

BZZZZ

WOW?! REALLY?

HEROZ4U

JACK O'LANTERN: Halloween Surge Rates Apply.

You have: 1 new request

HEEEEELLLLP!

OVER HERE!

GIVE OL *JACK O'LANTERN* A MINUTE HERE.

HOLY AU GRATIN. *TRIPLE RATES!*

4 HEROZ 4U

URGENT! HEROES IMMEDIATELY!!

Rates Apply.

You have: 1 new request

OH, JACK'S IN A WEE BIT OF A PICKLE, HE IS.

SAVE US!

PLEASE!

HMMMMM.

WHO KNOWS? MAYBE THE PEOPLE ON THE APP NEED ME EVEN *MORE.*

YES, THAT'S WHAT I'LL CHOOSE TO BELIEVE.

I'LL CALL YOU A BOAT!

YE MISERABLE CUR, YE!

COME BACK!

SUPERMAN! BACK SO SOON?

METROPOLIS. THE NEXT DAY.

YES.

I TAKE IT NONE OF YOU READ THE NEWSPAPER THIS MORNING.

DO THEY STILL MAKE THOSE?

FLOPP

Daily Planet

Shipwreck off the coast of Ireland

Arena expansion

Hero Abandoned. Survivors to Appear at Halloween Party

Photographer honored

Lion repair delayed

Dow crosses 10,000

JACK O'LANTERN WAS AT THE SCENE, BUT HE GOT *CALLED AWAY* TO DO A HALLOWEEN PARTY ON *YOUR APP.*

WELL, IT *IS* HALLOWEEN TOMORROW.

SAVE IT.

I'M AS SHOCKED AS YOU ARE!

WE'LL LAUNCH AN INVESTIGATION IMMEDIATELY!

I JUST CAME TO LET YOU KNOW THAT I'M GOING TO RECOMMEND THAT THE HALL OF JUSTICE WITHDRAW ITS ENDORSEMENT FROM HEROZ4U.

EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY.

SLAW

HE'S REALLY GOOD AT THOSE DRAMATIC EXITS, ISN'T HE?

THIS IS GOING TO BE A *PROBLEM.*

DAMN SKIPPY IT'S A PROBLEM!

WITHOUT OUR HALL OF JUSTICE CONNECTION... WE'RE BASICALLY COSTUME CITY.

Tent cities in Metropolis?

SO WHAT ARE OUR OPTIONS?

WE EITHER *SELL THE COMPANY* OR FIND A *SCAPEGOAT.*

BUT WHATEVER WE DO...

...WE GOTTA ACT FAST.

BEFORE THE HALL OF JUSTICE MAKES AN *ANNOUNCEMENT.*

I REMEMBER THE DAY I GOT THIS JOB

HEROZ4U

IT WAS THE WORST DAY OF MY LIFE

BECAUSE THAT WAS THE DAY THEY DESTROYED HIM.

MANHUNTER. MY BOSS. MY MENTOR. THE MAN WHO TAUGHT ME HOW TO RUN AN OFFICE.

EVERYTHING WAS FINE. THEN, OUT OF THE BLUE, HE GOT A CALL FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

SURE, I'LL BE RIGHT DOWN!

NAH, IT'S FINE. I'LL LEAVE OUR ASSISTANT MANAGER, RED TORNADO, IN CHARGE.

NEXT THING I KNEW, HE WAS CLEANING OUT HIS DESK.

I... I NEVER WANTED IT. NOT LIKE *THIS.*

IT'S OKAY, RED. YOU'LL BE GREAT.

YOU'RE THE BEST WE GOT.

AS A HERO, I HAVE SPENT MY CAREER PURSUING VIOLENT YET HUMANE SOLUTIONS.

WHICH IS WHY WE ARE PROUD TO BE THE *EXCLUSIVE PROVIDER* OF HUMANE MOUSE-TRAPS.

WHAT MAKES THEM *HUMANE?*

THEY LET THE MOUSE FINISH THE CHEESE BEFORE KILLING IT.

SO HOW MANY CASES CAN I SIGN YOU UP--

HELLO?

HOW'S IT GOING TODAY, FOX?

THAT DEPENDS, DID YOU COME OVER HERE TO OFFER ME AN EASY-YET-HIGH-PAYING SECURITY GIG?

NO.

THEN *CRAP!* IT'S GOING CRAP!

WE ALL *HATE* YOU, YOU KNOW!

I KNOW.

LOL

STEAK KNIVES

HUH. I WONDER WHO IS CALLING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE--

BZZZTTT

HELLO-EE-OOO?

UNKNOWN CALLER 08:02

HI, RED? THIS IS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS. WE WOULD REALLY APPRECIATE IT IF YOU COULD COME IN FIRST THING *TOMORROW MORNING.* WE NEED TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT SOMETHING.

OH.

OKAY. I'LL BE THERE.

HEY, G.I.! HAVE YOU READ MAXWELL LORD'S *NEW BOOK?*

IS THIS WHEN A HUMAN WOULD PRETEND TO BE INTERESTED?

UH, KARA...I'VE GOT TO VISIT THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS TOMORROW, SO, UH, I MIGHT NOT BE IN. YOU'RE IN CHARGE WHILE I'M GONE.

OH. OKAY.

SURE THING, BOSS.

PLATINUM

YOU'RE THE BEST WE GOT, KARA.

9 WAYS TO TAKE WHAT'S YOURS

FLIP FLIP FLIP

WHOA.

*AM I READING THE ROOM RIGHT? DID YOU JUST GET HIM **FIRED**?*

YEAH, I GUESS...

...I SORTA DID.

DOLLAR MAJOR

Everything's $1

Everything's $1

WHAT ARE WE DOING HERE?

WE JUST NEED TO GET YOU STOCKED UP ON SOME SUPPLIES IS ALL.

Everything's $1

I...I NEVER THANKED YOU. FOR FINDING ME AN APARTMENT.

DON'T MENTION IT. THE COMPANY PAID FOR IT. PART OF THEIR PROGRAM TO HELP HEROES IN NEED.

IT'S THE SORT OF THING HEROZ4U IS SET UP TO DO.

OR WAS.

NATIONAL BRAND FACSIMILES

COMPARE &

SAVE

Cheeri-Us

CHOCOLATE

FLAVORED

CANDY

SALE

SALE

SALE

CHIPZ

WONDER BEARD

Lucky Charmz

$1

I'M JUST GLAD I WAS ABLE TO FIND A PLACE BEFORE...LOOK, TO BE HONEST, I'M PROBABLY NOT GOING TO HAVE THIS JOB TOMORROW.

I SHOULD GO HOME AND TELL MY WIFE...BUT I'M JUST NOT READY FOR THAT YET.

LET HER IMAGINE THAT I'M NOT A FAILURE, FOR ONE MORE NIGHT, ANYWAY.

SO, DO YOU REMEMBER ANYTHING YET? ABOUT WHERE YOU MIGHT ACTUALLY LIVE?

NO. IT'S LIKE WALKING IN A FOG. I CAN'T SEE ANYTHING, BUT I KNOW THE SHAPES ARE OUT THERE.

$1

BUT I'M HOPING THAT IF I PRETEND TO BE MYSELF...

...EVENTUALLY I'LL JUST BECOME ME AGAIN.

RED TORNADO'S HOUSE. LATER...

DO WE HAVE TO HAVE ENCHILADAS *AGAIN?*

NO.

WE *GET* TO.

I USED TO THINK THE DRYER WAS SHRINKING MY TIGHTS. BUT TURNS OUT IT WAS THE REFRIGERATOR ALL ALONG.

TEE HEE, DAD.

SO HOW WAS WORK TODAY?

GREAT! IT WAS... YOU KNOW, GREAT.

I'LL DO THE DISHES.

RED?

HEY. IS EVERYTHING OKAY?

SURE. EVERYTHING'S FINE. WHY WOULDN'T--

RED?

WHAT IS IT?

I TRIED TO NOT RUIN DINNER. TO KEEP IT TO MYSELF. BUT I JUST CAN'T.

FIRST THING TOMORROW MORNING, I HAVE A MEETING WITH THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, WHICH ONLY EVER MEANS *ONE THING*--A BEHEADING.

KATHY...TOMORROW I AM GOING TO LOSE MY JOB.

OH, RED.

IT'LL BE *OKAY.*

I TRIED TO TELL MYSELF THAT, TOO. I TRY TO TELL MYSELF THAT ABOUT *EVERYONE.*

"EVERYTHING WILL BE OKAY" IS THE LIE AROUND WHICH I'VE BUILT MY LIFE.

AND I'M JUST TOO TIRED TO BELIEVE IT ANYMORE. BECAUSE I SEE THE TRUTH ALL AROUND ME EVERY DAY. I SEE THE PEOPLE FOR WHOM IT WILL *NEVER* BE OKAY.

AND TOMORROW I BECOME ONE OF THEM.

THE NEXT MORNING.

AH, RED TORNADO! COME IN.

HELP YOURSELF TO A VITAMIN WATER.

WE CALLED YOU IN HERE TODAY BECAUSE WE RECEIVED A COMPLAINT ABOUT YOU.

AN *ANGRY* COMPLAINT, MAN.

G THOSE ELP S

SIGNED BY ALMOST THE *ENTIRE* OFFICE.

THEY REALLY *HATE* YOU!

WHICH WE THINK IS...

...AWESOME, MAN. JUST AWESOME!

YOU MUST BE A REAL *ANIMAL* IN THERE!

YOU'RE EXACTLY THE KIND OF MANAGER THAT PLACE *NEEDS,* BRO.

BRO!

WE NEED TO KNOW THE LUNATICS AREN'T RUNNIN' THE ASYLUM. GET ME?

WHAT...WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

RED...CAN I CALL YOU RED?

I FEEL LIKE I CAN BRING YOU INTO CONFIDENCE NOW.

Heroz4U: Projected Earnings: FY 22-25

THE HALL OF JUSTICE IS ABOUT TO WITHDRAW ITS ENDORSEMENT OF HEROZ4U. WHICH CREATES SOMETHING OF A CREDIBILITY ISSUE FOR US.

OUR PROJECTIONS SHOW THAT EARNINGS ARE ABOUT TO...UH... *SOFTEN.*

WHICH IS WHY WE NEED TO FIND A BUYER BEFORE THE NEWS BECOMES *PUBLIC.*

AND WE NEED *YOU* TO HELP US.

HOW?

IN ORDER TO SELL THE COMPANY, WE NEED A *LEAN* PORTFOLIO. WE NEED TO CUT COSTS DOWN TO A *BARE MINIMUM.*

HE'S TALKING ABOUT *LAYOFFS.*

OH, WOW. I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN DO--

AS HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA SAYS...

THE MORE YOU ARE MOTIVATED BY *LOVE,* THE MORE *FEARLESS* YOUR ACTION WILL BE.

I DON'T THINK THAT'S WHAT HE MEANT--

I CAN'T JUST LAY THEM ALL OFF.

PAT PAT PAT

YOU DON'T HAVE TO LAY OFF THE ENTIRE OFFICE.

ABOUT *HALF* OUGHTTA DO IT.

AND IT'S NOT LIKE YOU HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THESE PEOPLE *HATING* YOU.

THEY *ALREADY* HATE YOU, BRO.

YEAH. I--SUPPOSE THEY DO.

GOOD! WE'RE AGREED, THEN!

ONE MORE THING...

WE WANT YOU TO FIRE *POWER GIRL* FIRST. IN A SITUATION LIKE THIS, LOOSE LIPS SINK SHIPS.

TATTLETALE.

CAN'T BE TRUSTED, BRO.

ALL THINGS MUST PASS...

POWER GIRL

TO BE CONTINUED...

LEX LUT
LEXIC
Words of Wisdom by
by Lex Luthor
MAXWELL LORD
REALIZE
THE PRIZE
TAKE WHAT'S YOURS.
Bus
ti

One Star Squadron #4 cover
by Steve Lieber & Dave Stewart

4
HEROZ Tu
You have:
1 new
request

METROPOLIS. HALLOWEEN.

HOW ARE YOU FEELING TODAY, HONEY?

WELL, THEY DIDN'T FIRE ME.

HAVE A SAFE AND HAPPY HALLOWEEN!

RIP

RIP

BEWARE

I GUESS THAT'S *SOMETHING.*

SARTRE SAID THAT IT'S ONLY AFTER THE EXECUTIONER'S AXE MISSES THAT WE BEGIN TO LIVE.

OR AT LEAST, THAT'S *LIKE* SOMETHING HE WOULD HAVE SAID.

WELL, THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT YOU STILL HAVE A JOB.

IS IT, THOUGH?

WELP, I GOTTA GO. GOT A PARTY TONIGHT. DON'T WAIT UP.

OH, TRAYA, DON'T FORGET! YOU'VE GOT AN ORTHODONTIST APPOINTMENT AFTER SCHOOL.

NOW YOU TELL ME!

SO WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO TONIGHT?

THE "HAUNTED HAYRIDE" LOOKS SPOOKY.

I'M NOT SCARED OF ANYONE WHO WAS KILLED BY HAY.

YOU SEEM UNCHARACTERISTICALLY HARD TO PLEASE. IS EVERYTHING OKAY?

THEY WANT ME TO LAY OFF *HALF* THE OFFICE, KATHY.

OH, RED.

"TO MAKE IT EASIER TO SELL THE COMPANY."

IT'S JUST TOO MUCH OF A *HEADACHE* TO RUN A HERO-BASED COMPANY. TOO MANY *RULES.*

CAN'T DO ANY *WET WORK.* CAN'T SELL THE COMPANY TO *VILLAINS.*

I MEAN, WHO ELSE HAS EVEN *GOT* THAT KIND OF MONEY, AMIRITE?

"BUT EVEN AS THEY TOLD ME WHAT THEY WANTED ME TO DO, ALL I COULD FEEL WAS *RELIEF* THAT I WASN'T ONE OF THEM. GRATEFUL AT BEING SPARED THE MISERY I WAS ORDERED TO SPREAD."

BUT HERE, WE WANT YOU TO TAKE *THIS.*

"LIKE A KID WHO JUST SURVIVED ANOTHER ROUND OF *MUSICAL CHAIRS.*"

WHAT'S THIS?

IT'S FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLARS. WE'LL GIVE YOU SOME TIME TO GET RID OF PEOPLE, BUT IN THE MEANTIME, WE WANT YOU TO PAY THEM IN CASH.

GET 'EM OFF THE BOOKZ, YO!

"BUT WHAT KIND OF SICKO CAME UP WITH A GAME CALLED *MUSICAL CHAIRS*..."

OKAY.

"THAT DOESN'T EVEN ALLOW YOU TO ENJOY THE *MUSIC*?

"AS SOON AS I SHOW UP AT WORK THIS MORNING, I'VE GOT TO TELL THEM. TELL THEM THAT THE BOARD WANTS ME TO FIRE HALF OF THEM.

"AND THAT I WENT ALONG WITH IT.

"AND THE *WORST PART* IS THAT I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THIS MEANS FOR *GANGBUSTER*.

DOLPHIN COVE

"THE COMPANY IS PAYING FOR HIS RENT AS PART OF OUR CHARITY MISSION. I CAN'T IMAGINE *THAT* CONTINUING FOR MUCH LONGER."

DOLPHIN COVE

WEIRDO.

YEAH, I AGREE. THAT'S AWFUL.

BUT I HAVE TO BELIEVE IT'LL ALL BE OKAY IN THE END.

YEAH? AND WHY ARE YOU SO SURE?

BECAUSE THEY PUT A *HERO* IN CHARGE.

"CHAPTER SIX: SUCCESS IS A MISTRESS, NOT A WIFE.

SQUAD GOALZ:
World's First Superhero College
Learn how to become heroes from heroes.
Veterans welcome!
(Unaccredited)

HERE'S SOMETHING EVERY BILLIONAIRE KNOWS--

--SUCCESS IS A **UNICORN.** AN ABERRATION.

"HI, I'M MANAGER KARA."

"HI, I'M KARA, THE MANAGER."

YOU START AN OIL COMPANY AT THE DAWN OF THE MACHINE AGE. YOU CREATE A MASSIVE ONLINE STORE JUST AS THE INTERNET GETS ROLLING.

HAVING THE RIGHT IDEA AT JUST THE RIGHT PLACE AND TIME IN HISTORY...**AND** BEING RICH ENOUGH TO ACT ON IT...WELL, THAT'S EXCEEDINGLY RARE.

Back
Playing Next
REALIZE THE PRIZE
MAXWELL LORD
Chapter 26
1:20
-4:20

DESPITE OUR CORPORATE "CREAM RISES TO THE TOP" MYTHOLOGY, **NOBODY** GETS RICH JUST HAVING ONE BRILLIANT IDEA AFTER ANOTHER.

YOU GET RICH BY TAKING YOUR **ONE GOOD IDEA** AND THEN **MILKING IT FOR ALL IT'S** WORTH.

Downtown Metropolis
EXIT ONLY

YOU GET LAWS PASSED TO PROTECT YOU FROM COMPETITION. YOU REFUSE TO PAY TAXES ON THE FORTUNE YOU JUST AMASSED.

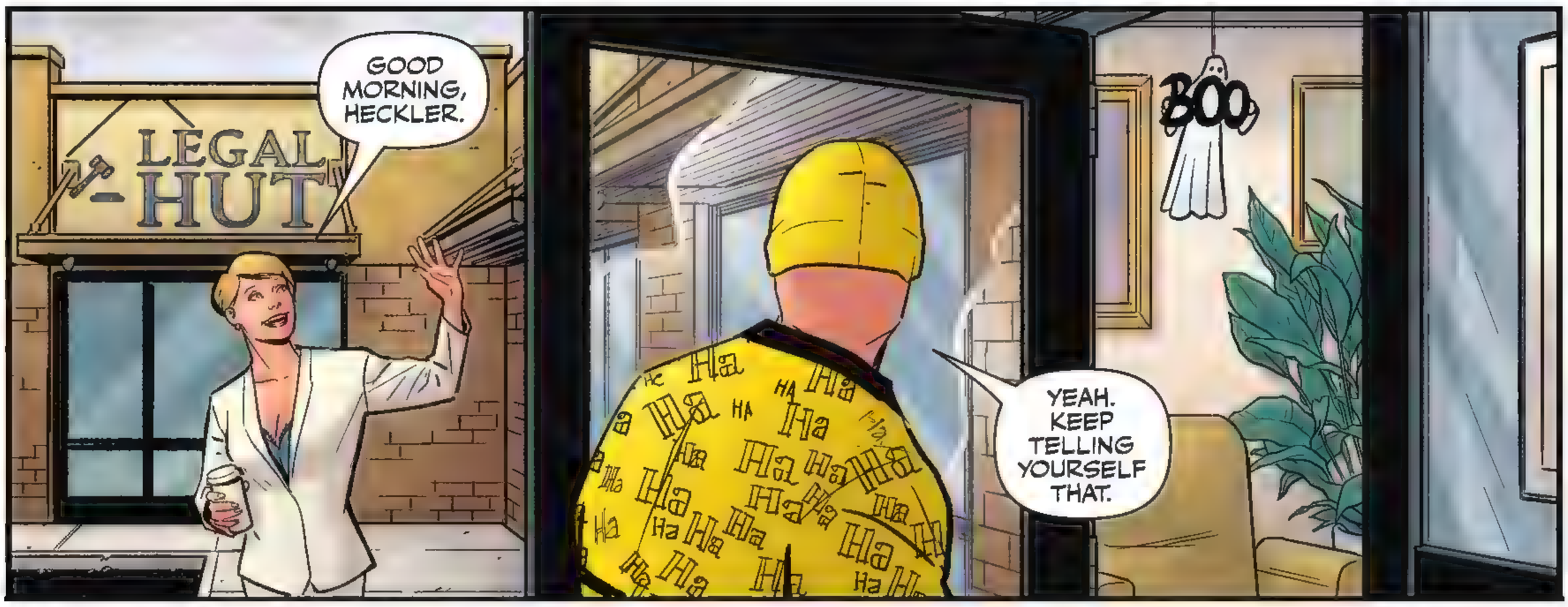
YOU **GET RICH** BY MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR ONE BIG SUCCESS.

POOR RED.

DIDN'T EVEN SEE IT COMING.

HEROZ4U

YOU **STAY RICH** BY INSULATING YOURSELF FROM ALL THE **FAILURES** TO COME.



G.I. ROBOT, I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT WHEN I TAKE OVER AS MANAGER, I WON'T FORGET YOU.
I JUST WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT YOU'VE BET ON THE RIGHT HORSE.
PLATINUM
UHHH... YOU MIGHT WANT TO TAKE A SEAT.

IF I COULD HAVE EVERYONE'S ATTENTION.
I MET WITH THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS YESTERDAY... AND I'VE GOT SOME ANNOUNCEMENTS.
SO... GATHER AROUND.
OCT. SA
GI ROBOT
HECKLER

ONE DOWNSIZE FITS ALL

MARK RUSSELL-WRITER | STEVE LIEBER-ARTIST | DAVE STEWART-COLORIST | DAVE SHARPE-LETTERER
STEVE LIEBER AND DAVE STEWART-COVER | CHRIS ROSA-ASSOCIATE EDITOR
BRITTANY HOLZHERR-EDITOR | PAUL KAMINSKI-SENIOR EDITOR
SUPERMAN CREATED BY JERRY SIEGEL AND JOE SHUSTER. BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH THE JERRY SIEGEL FAMILY.

OH! I *KNOW* THIS SCENE! THIS IS THE *COFFEE'S FOR CLOSERS* SPEECH FROM *GLENGARRY GLEN ROSS!*

NO IT'S NOT.

OCTOBER

G.I. ROBOT DOES NOT UNDERSTAND. WHAT IS A COFFEE'S FOR CLOSERS SPEECH?

YOU KNOW, WHERE ALEC BALDWIN TELLS THE SALESMEN ABOUT THE SALES CONTEST WHERE THIRD PRIZE IS *YOU'RE FIRED?*

OH MY GOD. REALLY?! IS *THAT* WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE?

"YOU SEE THIS WATCH? THIS *WATCH* COST MORE THAN YOUR *CAR.*

"THAT'S WHO *I AM.* AND YOU'RE *NOTHING.*"

YEAH, THAT'S THE MOVIE!

THIS IS NOT A *COFFEE'S FOR CLOSERS SPEECH!*

I THINK I'M GONNA BE SICK.

COULD WE ALL JUST *FOCUS?*

THEY'RE SELLING THE COMPANY. AND THEY WANT ME TO *CUT COSTS.*

IN SHORT... THEY WANT LAYOFFS.

SPECIFICALLY, THEY WANT ME TO LAY OFF *HALF* OF YOU.

OCT. SALES TO

G.I. ROBOT

YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS!

G.I. ROBOT SHOULD NOT HAVE BOUGHT A BOAT.

SO THEN... IT'S *WORSE* THAN A *COFFEE'S FOR CLOSERS* SPEECH.

IRONICALLY, THIS WOULD BE SCARIER IF IT WASN'T HAPPENING ON HALLOWEEN.

OCT SALES TO

G.I. ROBOT

HECKLER

FOLDED MAN

FLYING FOX

I'M SORRY, EVERYONE. BUT I'M POWERLESS. THIS COMES FROM THE TOP.

ED TORNADO

MANAGER

YES, COULD YOU PUT ME THROUGH TO THE *BOARD OF DIRECTORS?*

HELLO? YES, THIS IS *POWER GIRL!*

YOU KNOW... "YOUR WOMAN ON THE *INSIDE*"?

POWER GIRL! CAN I GET YOU A VITAMIN WATER?

I'M ON THE PHONE!

*WHAT IS GOING ON? I WAS ASSURED THAT I WAS **NEXT IN LINE.** THAT MY REPORTS ON RED TORNADO--*

I THINK I KNOW WHAT THIS IS ABOUT AND LET ME JUST SAY THAT THIS WAS NOT AN *EASY* DECISION.

*YOU WERE A VALUED MEMBER OF THE TEAM. WE JUST NEEDED TO MAKE THE PAYROLL A LITTLE LESS **BULKY.** I'M SURE YOU UNDERSTAND.*

WAIT. WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

*YOU MEAN HE HASN'T **FIRED** YOU YET?*

OH, WELL, THIS *IS* AWKWARD. I SUPPOSE I'M DOING THE HONORS, THEN.

SORRY, POWER GIRL... BUT WE'RE GOING TO NEED YOU TO CLEAN OUT YOUR DESK.

LIFE IS A SERIES OF TRANSITIONS.

"MAKE SURE TO GIVE YOUR KEYCARD TO RED TORNADO BEFORE YOU LEAVE."

All employees must stop crying before returning to work.

HERO

HEY THERE!

OH BOY. IT'S STARTING.

WHERE'S MY FAVORITE BOSS?

OH, *THERE* HE IS!

WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU, FOX?

IT'S JUST THAT... I CAN TELL YOU THIS, RIGHT? WE'RE ***BROS,*** RIGHT?

=SIGH= WHAT IS IT?

I...I'VE BEEN HERE ***TEN YEARS.*** I KNOW I'M NOT A GREAT SALESMAN. I'M NOT EVEN A DECENT SALESMAN. BUT I'VE BEEN HERE FOR TEN YEARS.

AND THERE'S ***NOTHING*** WAITING FOR ME OUT THERE, RED. NOTHING.

HOW MANY OF THE OTHERS FEEL...

I SEE.

RED TORNADO MANAGER

IS THIS THE LINE FOR PEOPLE TRYING NOT TO GET FIRED?

WHAT ARE YOU DOING, RED?

WHAT WOULD MANHUNTER DO?

IT'S JUST... I'M JUST *SCARED.*

I'M SORRY I PRETENDED TO LIKE YOU JUST SO YOU WOULDN'T FIRE ME.

IT'S OKAY.

EVERYTHING'S GOING TO BE OKAY.

LISTEN. I KNOW YOU'RE ALL AFRAID.

BUT YOU'RE *HEROES.*

AND AS EVERY HERO KNOWS...

...*FEAR* IS A *TEMPORARY CONDITION.*

SO IF YOU PROMISE TO REMEMBER THAT YOU'RE HEROES...THEN I DO TOO.

AND HEROES DON'T SEE PEOPLE AS *EXPENDABLE.* THEY DON'T RUN AWAY FROM THOSE IN NEED.

SO AS LONG AS I AM YOUR MANAGER, I'M NOT LETTING *ANY* OF YOU GO.

AND THIS AFTERNOON, I'M GOING RIGHT OVER TO THAT CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS TO TELL THEM SO!

WOOHOO!

YAY!

YAY! WOOHOO!

YOU ARE ALWAYS WELCOME IN BLACK CONDOR'S NEST.

RED, CAN I TALK TO YOU?

THIS ISN'T EASY...

RED TORNADO MANAGER

COME HERE. I WANT TO SHOW YOU SOMETHING.

YOU DID *GREAT,* TERRY. FANTASTIC WORK.

4 HEROZ4U

Assigned Hero:
MINUTE MAN

Client: Metropolis Seashells & Nautical Supply

Customer rating

★★★★★

Client Comments

Minute Man was PHENOMENAL! Everyone loved hearing about all his adventures and he was a big hit with kids and adults alike. Will be returning to Heroz4U for ALL our hero needs!

I KNEW YOU HAD IT IN YOU.

YOU JUST NEEDED A CHANCE TO TURN THE SHIP AROUND.

THE IMPORTANT THING NOW IS TO *BUILD* ON THAT SUCCESS.

AND GUESS WHAT? I'VE GOT A SECURITY JOB. AN *EASY* ONE. JUST A MEET AND GREET FOR SOME CRYPTOCURRENCY INVESTORS.

BUT I WANT *YOU* TO HANDLE IT.

THANKS. BUT YOU SHOULD GIVE IT TO SOMEONE ELSE.

YOU OFFERED TO LET ME WORK IN THE OFFICE. IF THAT OFFER'S STILL GOOD, I'D LIKE TO TAKE YOU UP ON IT.

SURE, BUT I THOUGHT YOU WANTED--

I'M NO HERO, RED. AND I HAVEN'T BEEN FOR SOME TIME NOW.

I THINK IT'S TIME TO LET THE DREAM DIE.

MINUTE MAN IS LOOKING TO CHANGE HIS LIFE.

SO I'M ASSIGNING HIM TO THE *SALES TEAM.*

LET THE HEALING POWERS OF CAPITALISM COMMENCE!

PLATINUM

THIS IS WHERE WE KEEP TRACK OF ALL OUR SALES.

YOU'RE IN GOOD HANDS.

I'LL COME BACK TO CERTIFY THE SALES TONIGHT.

WHEN YOU MAKE A SALE, BE SURE TO FILE IT HERE OR IT DOESN'T COUNT TOWARD YOUR COMMISSION TOTAL.

GOT IT.

C'MON. I'LL SHOW YOU WHERE WE KEEP THE SALES LEADS.

SO, I'M GOING TO DO IT. I'M REALLY GOING TO DO IT.

JUST GO IN THERE AND TELL THEM THAT I **REFUSE** TO LAY ANYONE OFF. DARE THEM TO FIRE ME.

YEAH, THEY PAID LIKE THREE MILLION DOLLARS FOR IT. SO I AM LITERALLY WORKING UNDER A ***THREE-MILLION-DOLLAR*** PAINTING.

OF COURSE, IF THAT'S WHAT I'M **REALLY** GOING TO DO, THEN WHY DO I NEED TO KEEP TELLING MYSELF I'M GOING TO DO IT?

AND THEY THINK THEY CAN SELL IT FOR ***FOUR.***

I'M TELLING YOU, IF THIS PLACE ***EVER*** GOES UP IN FLAMES, I'M CLINGING TO THAT PAINTING. THAT WAY THEY'VE GOTTA SAVE ***ME,*** TOO! HA HA!

YES, I AM COMPLETELY AWARE OF MY LACK OF VALUE. OH, HOLD ON, DEBBIE.

USA

COAST CITY, USA

LONDON, UK

MINSK, RU

OH CRIPES. TRAYA'S GETTING BRACES. I'D TOTALLY **FORGOTTEN.** IF I LOSE MY DENTAL INSURANCE...

WELL, MAYBE IF I STAND UP TO THEM, THEY'LL ACTUALLY **ADMIRE** ME FOR IT. WHO KNOWS? MAYBE THEY WON'T **FIRE** ME. THEY SEEM LIKE WISE AND DISCERNING PEOPLE.

SURELY THEY KNOW A GOOD INVESTMENT WHEN THEY SEE IT.

USA

LONDON, UK

MINSK

MR. TORNADO? THE BOARD WILL SEE YOU NOW.

I READ ONCE THAT WHEN A DEER GETS SPOOKED IT RUNS BACK TO THE LAST PLACE IT FELT SAFE

DOLPHIN COVE

THAT UPON HEARING THE APPROACH OF AN ONCOMING VEHICLE, IT'S THIS INSTINCT THAT CAUSES THEM TO DOUBLE BACK OVER THE ROAD THEY JUST CROSSED

EVILDOERS BEWARE.

BEANS

ENCHILADAS

KNOCK

HEL...

AND THAT MORE OFTEN THAN NOT

I SUPPOSE WE'RE NOT THAT MUCH DIFFERENT ALWAYS FALLING BACK ON OUR RITUALS, ON THE INSTINCTS THAT WEREN'T WORKING TO BEGIN WITH, BECAUSE THEY FEEL SAFE TO US

THAT'S WHAT GETS US KILLED

TRICK OR TREAT!

NO!NO!NO!

UH...
GO AWAY! PLEASE...JUST GO AWAY.

WHAM WHAM WHAM
GO AWAY!
A

HE'S NUTS!

GO AWAY!
DOLPHI COVE
WHAT THE HELL?

WHAT'S GOING ON IN--

THUD

--UNGGHH!

TAKE IT EASY, FREAKPOT!

HOLD HIM *STILL*. I GOT THIS.

FZZZZT

HURRY! =UNFFH= THIS GUY IS ***STRONG!***

GET OFF ME!

GET OFF ME!

UHHNK!

THUD

GET OFF ME!

CHAPTER FIVE: STATUS QUO IS STATUS GO.

METROPOLIS WELCOMES YOU!

THOUGH THE WORLD MAY SEEM CRUEL, TAKE HEART IN THIS--EVERYTHING **BAD** THAT HAPPENS TO YOU HAPPENS FOR A **REASON.**

THE REASON BEING THAT YOU WERE **TOO WEAK** TO STOP IT.

SURE, EVERY NOW AND THEN, THE WEAK CATCH A BREAK. WE COME UP WITH LITTLE RULES TO PROTECT THEM. SOME SUBTLE LITTLE HEAD-NOD TO A FAIRER, MORE EQUITABLE WORLD.

BUT ASK YOURSELF THIS-- **WHO** MAKES THOSE RULES? ONCE YOU ANSWER THAT, EVERYTHING ELSE BECOMES **CLEAR.**

WHAT'S THAT?

HEROZ4U. IT'S AN APP.

COOL! I WONDER IF JACK O'LANTERN IS AVAILABLE?

WHETHER IN BUSINESS OR IN LIFE, THERE IS **ONLY ONE** RULE--

--BE THE ONE WHO **MAKES** THE RULES.

HEROZ4U CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS.

I KNOW YOU ORDERED ME TO LAY OFF A BUNCH OF MY PEOPLE.

THAT YOU ALL THINK OF ME AS SOME KIND OF *HEARTLESS MACHINE.*

BUT GOD HELP ME... I COULDN'T DO IT.

THE TRUTH IS... I'M NOT THE KIND OF LEADER YOU THINK I AM.

AND I'M PRETTY SURE I *DON'T WANT* TO BE.

DUDE. SAVE IT.

I GUESS WHAT I'M TRYING TO SAY IS...IF RUINING THESE PEOPLE'S LIVES IS *REALLY* WHAT YOU WANT, THEN I'M NOT THE ONE--

SERIOUSLY, NONE OF THAT *MATTERS* ANYMORE.

WE FOUND A BUYER, BRO.

YOU'RE *SOMEONE ELSE'S* PROBLEM NOW.

I MEAN, IT WAS EITHER *THAT* OR BURN IT DOWN FOR THE INSURANCE MONEY, RIGHT?

I AM LEGALLY OBLIGATED TO POINT OUT THAT THAT WAS A *JOKE.*

THIS WILL BE BEST FOR *EVERYBODY.* YOU'LL SEE.

I'M MAKING *ARNOLD PALMERS.* ANYONE ELSE WANT ONE?

YOU'RE USING *ORANGE JUICE.* ARNOLD PALMERS ARE MADE WITH *LEMONADE.*

SO WHAT'S ICED TEA WITH ORANGE JUICE, THEN?

I THINK THAT'S AN O.J. SIMPSON.

WAIT. SO WHO BOUGHT THE COMPANY?

YOU'LL NEVER BELIEVE IT.

WHO WOULD'VE THOUGHT THERE WAS SO MUCH MONEY IN *SEASHELLS?*

METROPOLI
SEASHELLS & NAUTICAL SUPP

GRAND OPENING

AHOY, LANDLUBBERS!

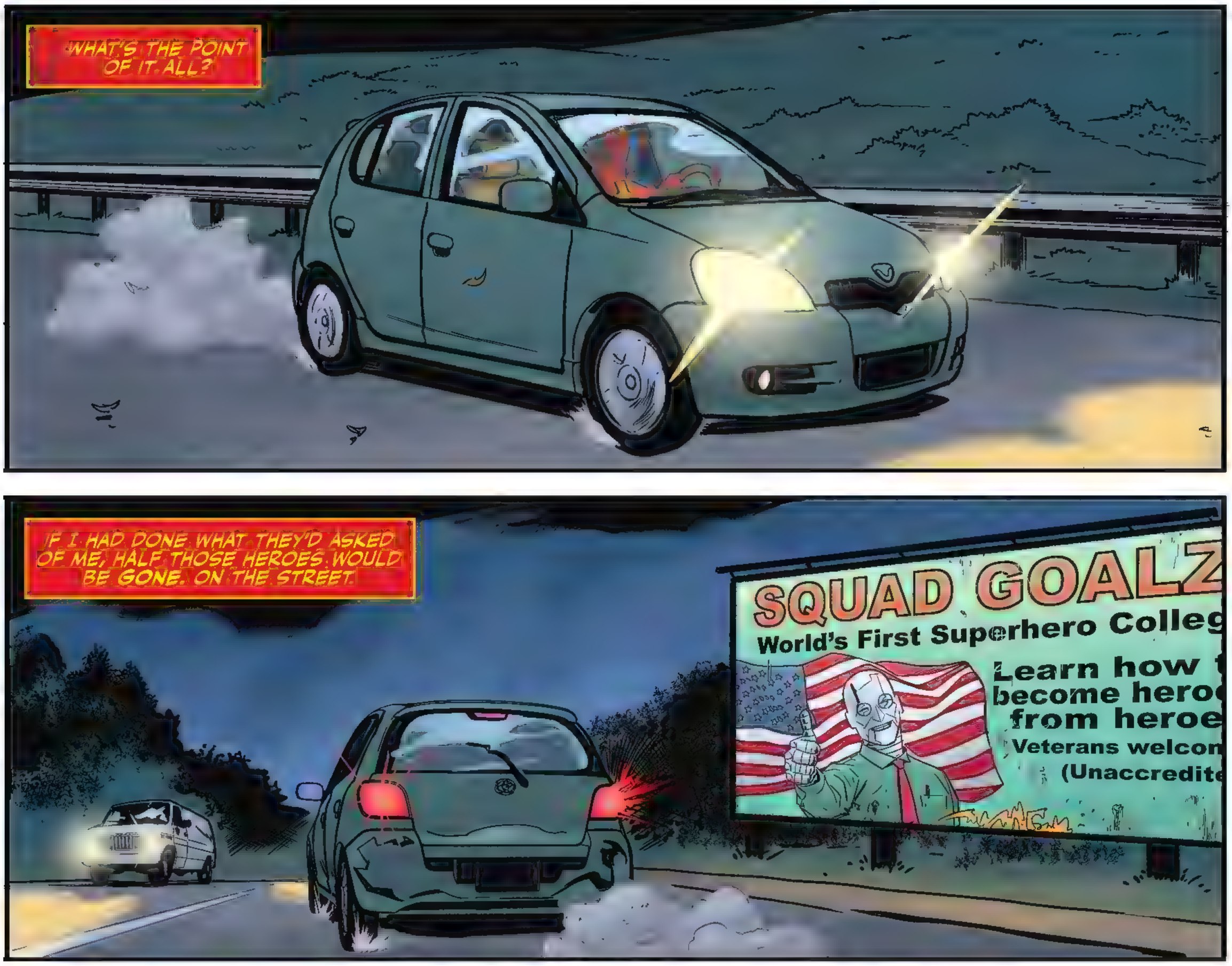
Ye are hereby invited to dine at the Captain's table. Free fish sticks and ship's biscuit for all who brave the journey. Seashells, driftwood sculptures, and other treasures of the sea, 50% off. The dark of the deep shall someday claim us all. But, 'til then, there be deals to be had.

SPECIAL GUESTS!

SEA SHANTIES!

I MEAN, YOU CAN STILL RESIGN, IF YOU *WANT.*

YOU JUST GOTTA DO IT TO *THEM.*


WHAT'S THE POINT OF IT ALL?
IF I HAD DONE WHAT THEY'D ASKED OF ME, HALF THOSE HEROES WOULD BE GONE. ON THE STREET.
SQUAD GOALZ
World's First Superhero Colleg
Learn how t
become hero
from heroe
Veterans welcon
(Unaccredite
AND IT WOULDN'T HAVE MADE A BIT OF DIFFERENCE.
METROPOLIS
WELCOMES YOU!
THEY STILL WOULD HAVE SOLD THE COMPANY. THEY WOULD HAVE MADE JUST AS MUCH MONEY.

WE'RE ALL JUST PIECES IN THEIR GAME. A GAME IN WHICH EVERYBODY WINS.

LEGAL HUT

EVERYONE EXCEPT THE PIECES

YGRO

Oh no...

TO BE CONTINUED...

One-Star Squadron #5 cover
by Steve Lieber & Dave Stewart

4
HEROZ 4u
You have:
1 new
request

HEROZ4U.
DOWNTOWN METROPOLIS.
THE NEXT MORNING.

PLEASE DON'T LEAN ON THE CAR, SIR.

ARE YOU THE ONE WHO CALLED THIS IN?

YES, I'M THE MANAGER.

DO YOU WORK HERE?

AS MUCH AS I WORK ANYWHERE.

Ha

OH MY RAO!

KARA? WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

I JUST CAME TO GET MY PERSONAL BELONGINGS.

RED...WHAT *HAPPENED?!*

AND YOU ARE?

I'M *POWER GIRL.* I'M THE ASSISTANT MANAGER. WELL... I WAS...UNTIL YESTERDAY.

SO THEN...AN EMPLOYEE WHO *RECENTLY SEPARATED* FROM THE COMPANY?

SHE GOT CANNED!

AND WHERE WERE *YOU* LAST NIGHT?

I WAS BY MYSELF. I HAD SOME SERIOUS THINKING TO--

HEY! ARE YOU IMPLYING THAT I DID THIS?!

THEY'RE JUST ASKING QUESTIONS, KARA.

WELL, I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING!

THIS IS THE FIRST I'M LEARNING OF *ANY* OF THIS!

SO IF YOU WANT TO ASK ME ANY MORE QUESTIONS, TALK TO MY *LAWYER!*

DO YOU *HAVE* A LAWYER?

NO!

IT DIDN'T TAKE THEM LONG TO FIGURE OUT THEY HAD AN ARSON ON THEIR HANDS

AND BINGO WAS HIS NAME-O.

GAS

OR TO HAUL US IN FOR QUESTIONING

POLICE

ME, BECAUSE I WAS THE MANAGER AND THE FIRST ONE ON THE SCENE

WAS ANYONE ELSE FIRED THAT DAY?

NO. JUST POWER GIRL.

AND POWER GIRL, BECAUSE SHE WAS THEIR PRIME SUSPECT

WITNESSES DESCRIBED YOU AS BEING IN AN AGITATED STATE YESTERDAY.

I'M IN AN AGITATED STATE NOW!

I TOLD THE POLICE THE TRUTH ABOUT WHAT I'D SEEN ABOUT WHAT I THOUGHT MIGHT HAVE HAPPENED

HAD SHE EVER USED HER HEAT VISION IN, YOU KNOW, ***ANGER*** BEFORE?

NO. LOOK, WHATEVER PERSONAL JOURNEY POWER GIRL IS TAKING INTO THE DARKNESS, I DON'T THINK SHE DID THIS.

WHY NOT?

BUT I COULDN'T ANSWER THE LAST QUESTION, BECAUSE THE ANSWER, THE ONLY ANSWER I COULD COME UP WITH, SOUNDED TOO TRITE TO BE SAID OUT LOUD. THAT

WELL, NO ONE ELSE HAD A ***MOTIVE.***

PLEASE. I JUST NEED A MINUTE.

ONCE A HERO, ALWAYS A HERO

Beefe Bonkers

WELCOME HERO FOR YOU

THANKS FOR MEETING ME HERE. THIS IS TEMPORARY, JUST UNTIL WE CAN FIND A NEW OFFICE.

I THOUGHT I'D HIT ROCK BOTTOM WHEN I STARTED DOING *BOAT SHOWS.*

BUT...I STAND CORRECTED.

I UNDERSTAND. THE SITUATION IS NOT IDEAL.

CYBER CYCLE!

FLAMIN' WINGZ

DO YOU SUPPOSE THE FIRE WAS AN ACT OF ANTI-ROBOT VIOLENCE?

PEOPLE HATE AND FEAR ROBOTS.

OR DO HUMANS MERELY RESENT G.I. ROBOT'S EXCELLENCE?

BECAUSE G.I. ROBOT ISN'T GOING ANYWHERE!

OH, GET OVER YOURSELF.

FIRST THEY TRIED TO BURY ME! THEN THEY TRIED TO DROWN ME!

DID THEY NOT KNOW THAT G.I. ROBOT WAS A SEED?!

HONESTLY, I DON'T THINK THIS HAD ANY-THING TO DO WITH YOU, GI.

SO THEN...WHO DID IT?

OH, COME ON! WE *ALL* KNOW WHO DID IT!

WHY DON'T WE JUST SKIP TO THE END WHERE IT TURNS OUT IT WAS THE DISGRUNTLED EMPLOYEE *ALL ALONG?!*

TO BE FAIR, I'M PRETTY DISGRUNTLED, TOO.

HELLO?

CAN I...CAN I COME IN?

LOOK. I JUST WANT TO SAY... I KNOW YOU ALL THINK I BURNED DOWN THE BUILDING.

AND THAT YOU'RE A TERRIBLE PERSON!

CYBER CYCLE!

FLAMIN' WINGZ

AND MAYBE I HAVE BEEN.

BUT I DIDN'T DO THIS.

PLEASE... YOU'VE GOT TO BELIEVE ME.

WHY?! YOU'VE ALWAYS *HATED US!*

ON MY LAST PERFORMANCE REVIEW, YOU WROTE *"BARELY ADEQUATE"!*

NOBODY'S ACCUSING YOU OF ADEQUACY.

DID YOU REALLY IMAGINE THEY WERE GOING TO MAKE YOU *MANAGER* AFTER ALL THIS?

I DIDN'T DO IT!

DO YOU MIND?!

WE'RE TRYING TO HAVE A *MEETING* HERE!

OH. SORRY.

CYB CYCLE!

BUT...IF NOT YOU... THEN WHO WAS IT?

I DON'T KNOW...

I DON'T KNOW...

DON'T ASK ME HOW, BUT I KNEW SHE COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT AND THERE WAS ONLY ONE OTHER POSSIBILITY I COULD THINK OF

I DIDN'T DO IT.

I BELIEVE YOU, KARA.

AND I HATED MYSELF FOR THINKING IT

DAYS EARLIER...

THE SIGNS WERE THERE IF ONLY I HAD CHOSEN TO SEE THEM.

WHY IS IT CALLED *DOLPHIN COVE?* YOU'RE NOWHERE NEAR THE WATER.

DOLPHIN COVE

PEOPLE FIND DOLPHINS REASSURING.

SO IS THE COMPANY GOING TO PAY HIS RENT EVERY MONTH?

THAT'S THE PLAN.

CAN I ASK YOU SOMETHING? ONE MANAGER TO ANOTHER?

HOW'S HE... YOU KNOW... HOW'S HE *DOING?*

IT'S NOT MY JOB TO BE A *SOCIAL WORKER.* GOT THIRTY UNITS. INSIDE EACH ONE LIVES ITS OWN FLAVOR OF TRAGEDY.

I WILL SAY THIS...HE'S *QUIET.* DOESN'T COOK WEIRD FOOD OR RATTLE OTHER PEOPLE'S CAGES. SO, IN A WAY, AN *IDEAL TENANT.*

BUT...

...HE NEVER *LEAVES.* JUST SITS IN THERE *ALL DAY* LIKE HE'S WAITING FOR SOMETHING TO FIND HIM.

I'VE SEEN IT BEFORE.

AND FRANKLY, IT TERRIFIES ME.

RELUCTANTLY I WENT BACK TO THE POLICE STATION

AND THIS GUY'S NAME WAS?

GANGBUSTER.

I MEAN HIS REAL NAME.

JOSE.

JOSE DELGADO.

I DIDN'T WANT TO EVEN CONSIDER THIS AS A POSSIBILITY. HE WAS DOING SO *WELL*.

BUT HE WAS HAVING SOME REAL... DIFFICULTIES.

WHAT KIND OF DIFFICULTIES?

SECURITY GUARD

VIOLENT OUTBURSTS.

THEY JUST CAME OVER HIM OUT OF NOWHERE. I THOUGHT HE WAS GETTING BETTER. BUT MAYBE THAT'S JUST WHAT I WANTED TO BELIEVE.

MR. TORNADO... THERE'S SOMETHING I NEED TO TELL YOU.

I'M NOT SURE I KNOW WHAT'S RIGHT AND WRONG ANYMORE.

I JUST KNOW WHAT PEOPLE NEED TO SURVIVE.

AND WHAT DESTROYS THEM.

METROPOLIS

WELCOMES YOU!

AND THAT FROM TIME TO TIME, WE ALL NEED HELP BECOMING THE PEOPLE WE ALWAYS IMAGINED OURSELVES BEING.

TO RECLAIM WHAT WE ONCE SAW IN OURSELVES

9 WAYS TO TAKE WHAT'S YOURS

I CAN SEE *TWO PEOPLE* TRAPPED ON THE FOURTEENTH FLOOR.

SEND *FIRE* AND *MEDICAL*. I'M HANGING UP NOW.

SMASH

QUICK QUESTION. IS YOUR STOVE GAS OR ELECTRIC?

HUH?! WHO--

GAS!

KABOOM

IN THAT CASE, *GET DOWN!*

OH MY GOD! YOU SAVED US! HOW CAN WE REPAY YOU?

CONVERT TO ELECTRIC.

SOMETIMES, WHEN YOU'RE AT YOUR LOWEST WHEN NOTHING IS GOING THE WAY YOU IMAGINED ALL YOU NEED IS SOMEONE TO REMIND YOU

...WHY YOU BECAME A HERO IN THE FIRST PLACE

SO...WHY DID I BECOME A HERO?

DO THE POLICE KNOW WHO DID IT?

NO.

BUT THEY CALLED ME IN FOR QUESTIONING.

AND THEY WANT ME TO COME BACK IN TOMORROW.

SO? I MEAN, YOU ALREADY TOLD THEM EVERYTHING YOU KNOW, RIGHT?

RIGHT?

KATHY, I...I DON'T KNOW HOW...

RED?

THERE ARE SOME THINGS WE KEEP TO OURSELVES, BECAUSE TO SAY THEM OUT LOUD WOULD JUST MAKE A BAD SITUATION WORSE

BEFORE I CAME HOME, I STOPPED BY THE CRIME SCENE. I...

MOST THINGS IN FACT

WE'RE ALL JUST WALKING CATALOGS OF SECRETS BUT AS HARD AS WE TRY—WE DON'T REALLY KEEP SECRETS

RED, WHAT IS IT?

WE JUST BABYSIT THEM FOR A WHILE

IT'S OKAY.

YOU CAN TELL ME, RED.

SOONER OR LATER, SOMEONE ALWAYS COMES TO PICK THEM UP

OKAY. I'LL TELL YOU *EVERYTHING.*

SINCE THE DAY I WAS FIRST ACTIVATED, THERE'S ONE QUESTION THAT HAS ALWAYS EATEN AT ME.

DO I HAVE A SOUL?

THIS WAS MY OFFICE.

SOMETHING INSIDE THAT KNOWS IF I'M DOING THE RIGHT THING? SOMETHING THAT MAKES ME MORE THAN JUST THE SUM OF MY CIRCUITRY AND PROGRAMMING?

AS BEST I CAN TELL, THE SOUL IS A SORT OF PHANTOM LIMB.

A MISSING PIECE OF OURSELVES THAT WE ONLY KNOW IS THERE...

...BECAUSE WE CAN STILL FEEL IT.

BUT THAT BEGS THE QUESTION..

KNOCK KNOCK

WHO CUT IT OFF US?

AND WHY?

TERRY?

ALL OUR RECORDS, CONTRACTS, OFFICE EQUIPMENT... GONE.

SO I IMAGINE THE SALE OF THE COMPANY IS KAPUT.

YEP. AND WITH IT, OUR *JOBS.*

BUT IT WAS ALL *INSURED,* RIGHT?

I MEAN, WON'T THEY JUST *REBUILD* IT?

NO.

"THE BOARD CALLED ME THIS MORNING. THEY'RE JUST GOING TO POCKET THE INSURANCE MONEY."

REMIND ME TO NEVER GET INTO THE HERO BUSINESS AGAIN.

GOOD NEWS! THE *CHECK CLEARED!*

THANK... GOD!

ONE MORE O.J. SIMPSON AND THEN I'M OFF TO THE AIRPORT!

OH.

DO THEY KNOW WHO DID IT YET?

NO.

BUT IF I HAD TO GUESS, IT LOOKS LIKE POWER GIRL IS GOING TO TAKE THE RAP.

SHE'S THE ONLY ONE WITH A CLEAR MOTIVE, BUT I JUST CAN'T BELIEVE--

TERRY? WHAT IS IT?

IT'S OKAY.

WE'LL FIND OTHER JOBS--

I *DID IT*, RED. I DID IT.

WHAT?!

WHY?

"YOU KNOW THAT JOB YOU SENT ME ON?"

THIS MUST BE THE PLACE.

ETROPOLIS SEASHELLS & NAUTICAL SUPPLY

METROPOLI
SEASHELLS & NAUTICAL SUPPL
GRAND OPENING
AHOY, LANDLUBBERS!
SEAL SHANTIE
SPECIAL GUESTS
PRIZES

"IT...IT WASN'T WHAT IT SEEMED."

MINUTE MAN?

AH. YOU MUST RECOGNIZE ME FROM THE *MOVIE.*

NO. NEVER SEEN IT.

THIS USED TO BE MY DEN. MY WIFE CALLED IT THE "OLD SPICE ROOM."

SALTY

BEFORE THE DIVORCE, THAT IS.

I'D ALWAYS *DREAMED* OF TURNING MY HOME INTO A NAUTICALLY THEMED STORE. BUT IT WAS SOMEWHAT *TRICKY* TO FIND AN INVESTOR, AS YOU CAN IMAGINE.

SO I WAS REALLY LUCKY TO FIND HIM.

WHO?

THE REAL OWNER OF THE COMPANY, OF COURSE.

MINUTE MAN! COME IN!

"*LEX LUTHOR* WAS USING IT AS A FRONT."

YOU MEAN--

YES. IT WAS *LITERALLY* A SHELL COMPANY.

"HE USED THE SEASHELL COMPANY TO BUY HEROZ4U."

YOU'RE A HERO. THEY MADE A MOVIE ABOUT YOU!

DON'T YOU DESERVE SOMETHING IN EXCHANGE FOR YOUR DECADES OF SERVICE?

"HE WANTED TO MAKE ME THE MANAGER. TO BE HIS MAN ON THE INSIDE.

THE LEXTANT

"HIS TO CONTROL."

CONSIDER THIS A DOWN PAYMENT.

MIRACLO 400mg

"HE WANTED ME TO GIVE HIM ACCESS TO OUR RECORDS. TO BE HIS PIPELINE OF INFORMATION ON OTHER HEROES.

"I WAS *WEAK.* SO I AGREED."

BUT I DIDN'T WANT TO GO THROUGH WITH IT. SO, NOT KNOWING WHAT ELSE TO DO...

...I BURNED THE PLACE DOWN.

I KNOW IT'S ARSON, BUT I FIGURED THE PLACE WAS *INSURED.*

TERRY...

I DIDN'T THINK IT THROUGH.

I KNOW. I KNOW.

NO. YOU DON'T.

THE POLICE JUST TOLD ME...

...THEY FOUND GANGBUSTER'S BODY AMONG THE REMAINS.

NO. THAT *CAN'T* BE.

THERE WAS NO ONE HERE WHEN I--

APPARENTLY, HE HAD ONE OF HIS EPISODES LAST NIGHT

HE HAD A RUN-IN WITH SOME OTHER TENANTS. FLED.

HELLO? POLICE?

THEY FIGURE THAT, NOT HAVING *ANYWHERE ELSE* TO GO, HE CAME BACK HERE.

HEROZ4

WHY HE DIDN'T COME OUT OR TRY TO SAVE HIMSELF.

NO ONE CAN SAY.

I... I *KILLED* HIM.

YOU DIDN'T KNOW.

HE'S STILL DEAD.

TERRY, ONCE THE POLICE FIND OUT YOU DID THIS...THEY'LL CHARGE YOU WITH MANSLAUGHTER AT THE VERY LEAST.

WHAT HAVE I *DONE?* WHAT DO I *DO?*

RUN, TERRY. YOU SHOULD RUN.

AND GO *WHERE,* RED?

THIS WAS THE *ONLY PLACE* I HAD!

I SHOULD HAVE STAYED HERE. I SHOULD HAVE BURNED WITH--

"I DON'T KNOW IF WHAT I DID NEXT WAS RIGHT OR WRONG, KATHY."

"I ONLY KNEW THAT AT THAT MOMENT, IT WAS WHAT HE NEEDED.

"AND THAT HE WAS THE ONLY PERSON I COULD SAVE."

WHAT'S THIS?

FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLARS.

TAKE IT AND *DISAPPEAR*, TERRY.

TAKE IT AND START A NEW LIFE.

GO!

"AND THAT WAS THE LAST THING I EVER SAID TO HIM."

TO BE CONTINUED...

THINGS LOST IN THE FIRE

MARK RUSSELL-WRITER | STEVE LIEBER-ARTIST
DAVE STEWART-COLORIST | DAVE SHARPE-LETTERER
STEVE LIEBER AND DAVE STEWART-COVER
CHRIS ROSA-ASSOCIATE EDITOR
BRITTANY HOLZHERR-EDITOR | PAUL KAMINSKI-GROUP EDITOR

SUPERMAN CREATED BY JERRY SIEGEL AND JOE SHUSTER.
BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH THE JERRY SIEGEL FAMILY.

One-Star Squadron #6 cover
by Steve Lieber & Dave Stewart

4
HEROZTu
You have:
1 new
request

FIFTEEN MONTHS LATER.

EVERY MORNING, YOU GET UP TO GO TO WORK, NOT REALLY WONDERING OR KNOWING WHAT DIFFERENCE IT WILL MAKE IN THE WORLD

FOR NO REASON MORE HEROIC THAN TO KEEP YOUR FAMILY IN CEREAL AND DOLLAR-STORE BREAD

WHY DON'T THEY EVER CLONE ANYTHING USEFUL, LIKE A HONEY-BAKED HAM?

SHUT UP, DAD.

Daily Pla

Scientists Clone Rat

Cheery-U's

Cheery-U's Nutrition Facts

CAN HELP LOWER CHOLESTEROL

UNDER BREAD

UNDER BREAD

BECAUSE IN A UNIVERSE UTTERLY APATHETIC TO THE PEOPLE WHO MEAN EVERYTHING TO YOU

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY, BABY.

REMEMBER, WE HAVE DINNER RESERVATIONS AT SEVEN.

GET A ROOM.

WONDER BEARD

JUST SHOWING UP IS AN ACT OF HEROISM.

MORNING, STEVE!

MORNING, RED!

ESPECIALLY CONSIDERING THAT TO SHOW UP OR NOT IS OFTEN THE ONLY REAL CHOICE THE WORLD OFFERS US

DOLLAR MAJOR

THEN AGAIN, MAYBE IT'S NOT HEROISM AT ALL. MAYBE NONE OF US WERE EVER HEROES.

MAYBE WE WERE JUST PEOPLE AFRAID OF NOT MATTERING

Everything's $1

VALENTINE'S DAY SALE! 50% OFF

DOES YOUR VALENTINE'S DAY SALE EXTEND TO THE CANNED CHILI?

ARE THESE FOR SOMEONE SPECIAL?

THAT DEPENDS. AM I SPECIAL?

I DUNNO. PROBABLY.

BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP

AND MAYBE WE DON'T

AND ONE OF THESE.

$1

BROCK KENSINGTON

BROCK KENSINGTON

MAYBE, DESPITE CALLING OURSELVES HEROES, WE NEVER TRULY MATTERED TO ANYONE

EXCEPT EACH OTHER

I'M SORRY, GANGBUSTER.

I WISH I COULD HAVE DONE MORE. I REALLY DO.

JOSE DELGADO
1972-2021
"EVILDOERS BEWARE."

AFTERMATHS AND LONG DIVISIONS

MARK RUSSELL-WRITER STEVE LIEBER-ARTIST
DAVE STEWART-COLORIST DAVE SHARPE-LETTERER
STEVE LIEBER AND DAVE STEWART-COVER
CHRIS ROSA-ASSOCIATE EDITOR
BRITTANY HOLZHERR-EDITOR PAUL KAMINSKI-GROUP EDITOR
Superman created by Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster.
By Special Arrangement with the Jerry Siegel Family.

I'M SORRY IT WASN'T ENOUGH.

AND IF I BETRAYED YOU BY HELPING TERRY ESCAPE JUSTICE THEN I'M SORRY FOR THAT TOO

THANK YOU. FOR ALL OF THIS.

DON'T MENTION IT.

IF IT WASN'T ME, ONE OF THE OTHER HEROES WOULD BE HELPING YOU OUT, I'M SURE.

MAYBE.

BUT YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SHOWED UP.

I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT YOU LIKE, SO I JUST GOT WHAT I NORMALLY BUY FOR MYSELF.

I'LL TRY TO GO LESS HEAVY ON THE CHILI NEXT TIME.

BUT I LIKE TO THINK THAT IF YOU WERE STILL ALIVE YOU'D UNDERSTAND

THIS WORLD IS JUST SO HARD ON SURVIVORS

THE TRUTH IS, WE'RE ALL DROWNING OUT HERE

BUT I'M SORRY NONETHELESS

JOSE DELGADO, KNOWN TO MANY OF YOU AS GANGBUSTER, WAS A MAN WHO LOVED TO SEE JUSTICE PREVAIL.

SORRY THAT YOU NEVER GOT TO LEAD THE LIFE YOU DESERVED

GOOD-BYE, JOSE.

BUT MOSTLY

I'M SORRY THAT THERE ISN'T MORE TO SAY

SO, WHATEVER MY MISTAKES, WHATEVER I MIGHT HAVE DONE DIFFERENTLY, I STILL HAVE TO BELIEVE...

YEAH, BEEN A BAD WEEK. NO WIND SINCE THURSDAY.

AND NOW THE WIND FARM'S TOTALLY FROZEN.

WELL, LET'S SEE WHAT WE CAN DO ABOUT THAT.

THAT ANY HELP YOU CAN OFFER SOMEONE IS STILL A GOOD THING

LAST MONTH, DURING THE ICE STORM, METROPOLIS' ENTIRE POWER GRID WENT DOWN.

I CREATED A BRISK BUT WARM WIND, DEFROSTED THE TURBINES, STARTED UP THE WIND FARM.

I GENERATED MORE THAN FOUR THOUSAND MEGAWATTS OF ENERGY, POWERING HOSPITALS, RETIREMENT HOMES, AND A LITTLE MORE THAN SEVENTY-EIGHT THOUSAND RESIDENCES.

NOT SO FAST!

ACCORDING TO THE DAILY PLANET, I SAVED OVER FIFTY LIVES THAT DAY JUST BY KEEPING THE POWER ON.

BETTER THAN MY BEST DAY AS A HERO.

AND IN THE END, I SUPPOSE THAT'S ALL ANYBODY WANTS. NOT SOMEONE OUT THERE SAVING THE WORLD FROM SOME GIANT SPIDER, ALIEN INVADER, OR EVIL CABAL OF VILLAINS.

THANKS, RED!

BE SURE TO GET THOSE WINDMILLS WEATHERIZED, GARY.

BUT SIMPLY TO KEEP THE WHEELS SPINNING ON THE LIFE THEY'VE COME TO KNOW.

OR MAYBE I JUST FIND LIFE SAFER AS A REGULAR PERSON

BECAUSE I DON'T THINK I COULD LIVE WITH FAILING SOMEONE ELSE AS BADLY AS I FAILED GANGBUSTER

AND NOW IT'S TIME TO GLOAT OVER CELEBRITY MISFORTUNES WITH OUR NEW FEATURE... **FAILURE TO DEPLOY!**

SO...HEY! DOES ANYONE REMEMBER **MINUTE MAN?** THE SUPERHERO WHOSE POWERS ONLY LASTED FOR **ONE MINUTE?**

THEY MADE A **MOVIE** ABOUT HIM. AND...IF YOU WATCH A LOT OF CABLE TV AT THREE A.M. YOU MIGHT HAVE **SEEN IT!**

WEEELLLLL... TURNS OUT HE'S **POOR!**

TMI

AND EVEN WORSE... **DEAD!**

SOON AFTER THE HEROZ4U ARSON, HE MYSTERIOUSLY **DISAPPEARED.**

WAS IT TRUE?

BUT, APPARENTLY, HE WAS RIGHT UNDER OUR NOSES THE WHOLE TIME! BEGGING FOR SPARE CHANGE ON THE SIDE OF THE METROPOLIS TURNPIKE, TELLING ANYONE WHO'D LISTEN THAT HE WAS MINUTE MAN.

SO LET'S TAKE A BRIEF MOMENT TO **REMEMBER** MINUTE MAN, FOLLOWED BY A LONG, COLD ETERNITY OF **FORGETTING** HIM.

FAILURE TO DEPLOY

TMI

BOOM!

SPECIALS

MENU

BY HELPING TERRY, HAD I SOMEHOW MADE THINGS EVEN WORSE FOR HIM?

I HAD TO KNOW

METROPOLI
CORONI
ADMINISTRATIO
OPERATIONS

I HAD TO SEE IT FOR MYSELF

NO FAMILY. NO FRIENDS. NOBODY EVEN CALLED TO INQUIRE ABOUT THIS GUY.

ARE YOU WILLING TO IDENTIFY THE DECEASED?

SURE. WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO?

YOU JUST GOTTA LOOK INSIDE THE LITTLE CORPSE DRAWER AND TELL ME IF YOU RECOGNIZE HIM.

YOU ACTUALLY CALL IT A "CORPSE DRAWER"?

IS THAT HIM?

YEAH, THAT'S HIM.

STRANGE. HE LOOKS *NOTHING* LIKE BROCK KENSINGTON.

I LIED

WHOEVER THAT WAS I WASN'T TERRY

Stealing from corpses is a crime.

BUT I COULDN'T GET IT OUT OF MY MIND. WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO TERRY? TO MINUTE MAN

DID ANYONE KNOW?

LEARNING CENTER

IT TOOK ME MONTHS TO WORK UP THE COURAGE TO ASK

Squad Goalz Superhero College: 3rd Floor!

G.I. ROBOT WAS THE EASIEST TO TRACK DOWN, SO HE WAS MY FIRST STOP.

CAN ANYONE TELL ME THE FOUR MAJOR GROUPS OF SUPERHEROES?

ALIEN SAVIOR.

TECH SOLDIER.

SCIENCE-ACCIDENT SURVIVOR.

RICH GUY.

TECHNICALLY, "RICH GUY" IS NOT ONE OF THE MAJOR GROUPS OF SUPERHEROES.

WHAT I WAS LOOKING FOR WAS **VIGILANTE.**

THE FOURTH MAJOR GROUP OF SUPERHERO IS VIGILANTE. A NORMAL PERSON, SOMEONE NO ONE ASKED TO BECOME A HERO, WHO SIMPLY TAKES JUSTICE INTO THEIR OWN HANDS.

SO, IF YOU WERE TO BECOME SUPERHEROES, TO WHICH OF THOSE MAJOR GROUPS DO YOU THINK YOU WOULD BELONG?

THAT'S RIGHT... **VIGILANTES.**

VIGILANTES

WELL, THAT APPEARS TO BE ALL THE TIME WE HAVE FOR TODAY! READ CHAPTER THREE FOR TOMORROW!

AND REMEMBER! YOU'RE ALL VIGILANTES!

I HADN'T SEEN ANYONE FROM THE OFFICE IN OVER A YEAR

HAVE YOU HEARD ANYTHING FROM MINUTE MAN, SINCE...

NO. G.I. ROBOT WAS NEVER PARTICULARLY CLOSE TO MINUTE MAN.

OR ANYONE.

WHY? DOES THIS HUMAN OWE YOU MONEY?

NO. IT'S JUST THAT...I LIED TO THE POLICE FOR HIM. I LIED TO THE CORONER'S OFFICE. I'VE PRETTY MUCH RELINQUISHED ANY CLAIM TO BEING A HERO...

I JUST WANT TO KNOW THAT IT WAS FOR *SOMETHING.*

I THINK YOU MUST PREPARE YOURSELF FOR THE POSSIBILITY THAT HE MIGHT ALSO BE DEAD. THESE HUMANS ARE REMARKABLY FRAGILE.

BUT AS FOR BEING A HERO...IF PEOPLE COULD EXPECT TO BE PROTECTED BY THE PEOPLE THEY PAY TO PROTECT THEM...THEN THERE WOULDN'T BE ANY NEED FOR **US,** WOULD THERE?

THE VERY FACT THAT WE **EXIST** MEANS HUMAN INSTITUTIONS CANNOT BE TRUSTED.

ANYWAY, G.I. ROBOT HAS A BOUNTY-HUNTING CLASS IN THREE MINUTES.

BUT IT WAS NICE TO SEE YOU, RED TORNADO.

NEXT I WENT TO SEE THE HECKLER

BUT HE WAS OUT ON A JOB INTERVIEW

PLANET OF THE VAPES

WHAT ARE WE DOING OUTSIDE, MR. LUTHOR?

IT'S CALLED A *WALKING INTERVIEW.* THEY DO IT ALL THE TIME IN CUPERTINO.

HOT DOGS

SALE

Ice Cold Sodas

OKAY. AND WHAT'S THE *POSITION,* EXACTLY?

IT'S FOR *GALLEY,* MY NEW WORKFORCE APP!

OKAY. BUT YOU KNOW THAT I'M A *HERO,* RIGHT? TECHNICALLY SPEAKING, ANYWAY.

urp

GALLEY

HERO... VILLAIN...WHAT DOES IT *MATTER?* AS A SALESMAN, YOU WERE A *STONE-COLD ASSASSIN.*

GUYS LIKE YOU AND ME, WE JUST *GET IT.*

I KNOW, GREED IS *UNFASHIONABLE.* BUT. IT. GETS. THINGS. DONE.

I MEAN, EVERYONE *GRIPES* ABOUT CAPITALISM BUT IT'S STILL THE BEST WAY FOR AN ECONOMY TO ENSURE THE MOST EFFECTIVE DISTRIBUTION OF RESOURCES.

YOU REALIZE YOU'RE MAKING THAT POINT IN FRONT OF A GUY TWIRLING A SIGN IN A GORILLA COSTUME, RIGHT?

MY NEXT STOP WAS THE ONE I WAS MOST NERVOUS ABOUT BUT I DIDN'T KNOW WHERE ELSE TO TURN.

THANKS FOR MEETING ME FOR COFFEE, KARA.

GROUNDS for TERMINATION

NE 15TH AV

WELL, IT WAS THE LEAST I COULD DO AFTER, YOU KNOW, TRYING TO STEAL YOUR *JOB.*

IT WAS NEVER REALLY MINE. I SEE THAT NOW.

WHAT I'M HERE FOR...WHAT I WAS WONDERING WAS...

...HAVE YOU SEEN TERRY?

MINUTE MAN? I HEARD HE'D DIED.

NO. I WENT TO THE MORGUE TO SEE FOR MYSELF. IT WASN'T HIM.

NO, RED. I HAVEN'T HEARD ANYTHING FROM HIM. I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT BECAME OF HIM.

I SEE.

BUT WHILE I HAVE YOU...

...I JUST WANTED TO *APOLOGIZE.*

KARA, THAT'S NOT NECESS--

PLEASE. JUST LET ME DO THIS.

"I'VE BEEN WRONG.

"ABOUT SO MANY THINGS.

"I TRIED SO HARD. TO LIVE BY THIS PLANET'S RULES.

"TO BE SUCCESSFUL.

"BUT IS THERE ANYTHING A WORLD OF SEVEN BILLION PEOPLE NEEDS *LESS* THAN ONE MORE PERSON PLAYING THE SAME GAME?

"IS THERE ANY POINT IN WINNING A GAME NO ONE EVEN WANTS TO PLAY?

"SOMEHOW, I LOST TRACK OF WHAT IT WAS I CAME HERE TO DO.

"BUT WHEN YOU FORGET WHAT YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE DOING, SOMETIMES THE BEST THING...

METROPOLIS WELCOMES YOU!

"...IS JUST TO REMEMBER *WHO* YOU ARE."

I WAS GLAD TO SEE THAT POWER GIRL WAS DOING WELL, THAT SHE WAS ON THE RIGHT TRACK.

OR IF NOT THE RIGHT TRACK, THEN AT LEAST ONE THAT LED SOME-PLACE WORTH BEING

BUT NOBODY SEEMED TO KNOW WHERE TERRY WAS

OR WHAT HAD BECOME OF HIM

THOUGH I SUPPOSE THAT'S THE FATE THAT ULTIMATELY AWAITS US ALL

HISTORIC DIS

THE SOFT OBLIVION OF BEING QUIETLY FORGOTTEN

METROPOLIS TRIBUNE

OF DISAPPEARING FROM A WORLD THAT NEVER REALLY NEEDED US IN THE FIRST PLACE

AND MAYBE THAT'S FOR THE BEST.

HEY, RED!

I THINK YOU GOT A FAN LETTER.

The Torn

FAN MAIL? REALLY?

I HAVEN'T GOTTEN A FAN LETTER IN...

TERRY
P.O. BOX 4256
MISSOULA, MT
59801

RED TORNADO
1815 JESSUP
METROPOLIS,

WELL, I'LL LEAVE THE TWO OF YOU ALONE.

ar Red,

Please forgive me for using this ancient mode of communication. But after seeing reports of my death in the news, I thought you might like to know that, despite my best efforts, I am still very much alive.

The last time we saw each other was the worst day of my life. And that's a pretty high bar.

MINUTE MAN
FREEDOM ISN'T FREE

You were right. I needed to escape. But escape takes many forms. Some more permanent than others.

And as we both know, there is no such thing as a graceful exit.

MINUT
FREEDOM

Just doors we close to conceal the mess we've made.

MIRACLO
400mg
CAUTION: TAKE NO MORE THAN ONE PILL DAILY

In the end, I chose this method of escape, not because it was any less messy, but because it seemed somehow appropriate.

A disappointing end to a disappointing tale.

And that would have been the end. You would not be reading this letter now.

But for one tiny accident of fate.

DAMN WATERBEDS!

The only reason they found me was because the downstairs apartment was being flooded.

Apparently, even in death I am a pain in the ass.

They life-flighted me to Metropolis General.

HE'S NOT GONNA MAKE IT!

GIVE HIM THE ADRENALINE SHOT.

I woke up on the medical chopper, which I was reasonably sure was not the afterlife.

GASP!

AND...POP GOES THE WEASEL!

THOUGHT WE LOST YOU, HOMBRE.

But there's a reason I'm telling you all this. And it's not because it's dramatic.

OH MY GOD...

But because it's true.

I KNOW THAT GUY!

Because who was flying that helicopter but T-Bag, my old Miraclo dealer.

T-BAG?

IT'S JUST TREVOR NOW, MAN.

NOW I'M OUT OF THE *GAME*.

YOU'RE NOT STILL MAD AT ME, ARE YOU?

NAH.

YOU WEREN'T TRYIN' TO RIP ME OFF. YOU WERE JUST SELLING WHAT YOU HAD TO SELL.

I GUESS WE ALL WERE.

He told me how he had turned his life around. How he had taken helicopter flying lessons. Gotten his license.

That life is, for some of us, the name we give to a long list of mistakes. But that as long as you're alive, you haven't screwed things up so badly that you can't come back from them.

And I wondered if that was possible for me, too.

After they let me out of the hospital, I caught the next bus to Montana. Where my sister lives.

I took the money you gave me and I opened an ice cream stand.

I mostly serve hikers and tourists.

PINE CONES

Every life is an unfinished story.

And every day, a chance to turn things around. To redeem ourselves.

And others.

As I learned that fateful day, which now seems a lifetime ago, we are not always the heroes of our own stories. As often as not, we are the ones who need saving.

Every good hero story is the story of people helping each other survive.

The story of those who showed up for you, even when you weren't there for yourself.

TERRY

I don't know if forgiveness is possible for what I've done. But there's one thing I no longer doubt.

Even though I lost all right to be one...

HEROZ4U

EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

...I know there are still heroes left in the world.

And that we all have more than one life in us, should we be lucky enough to get a second chance.

Goodbye, Red. And most of all, thank you for being a hero.

Yours now and forever,
Terry.

HERO24U

HERO24U
EMP

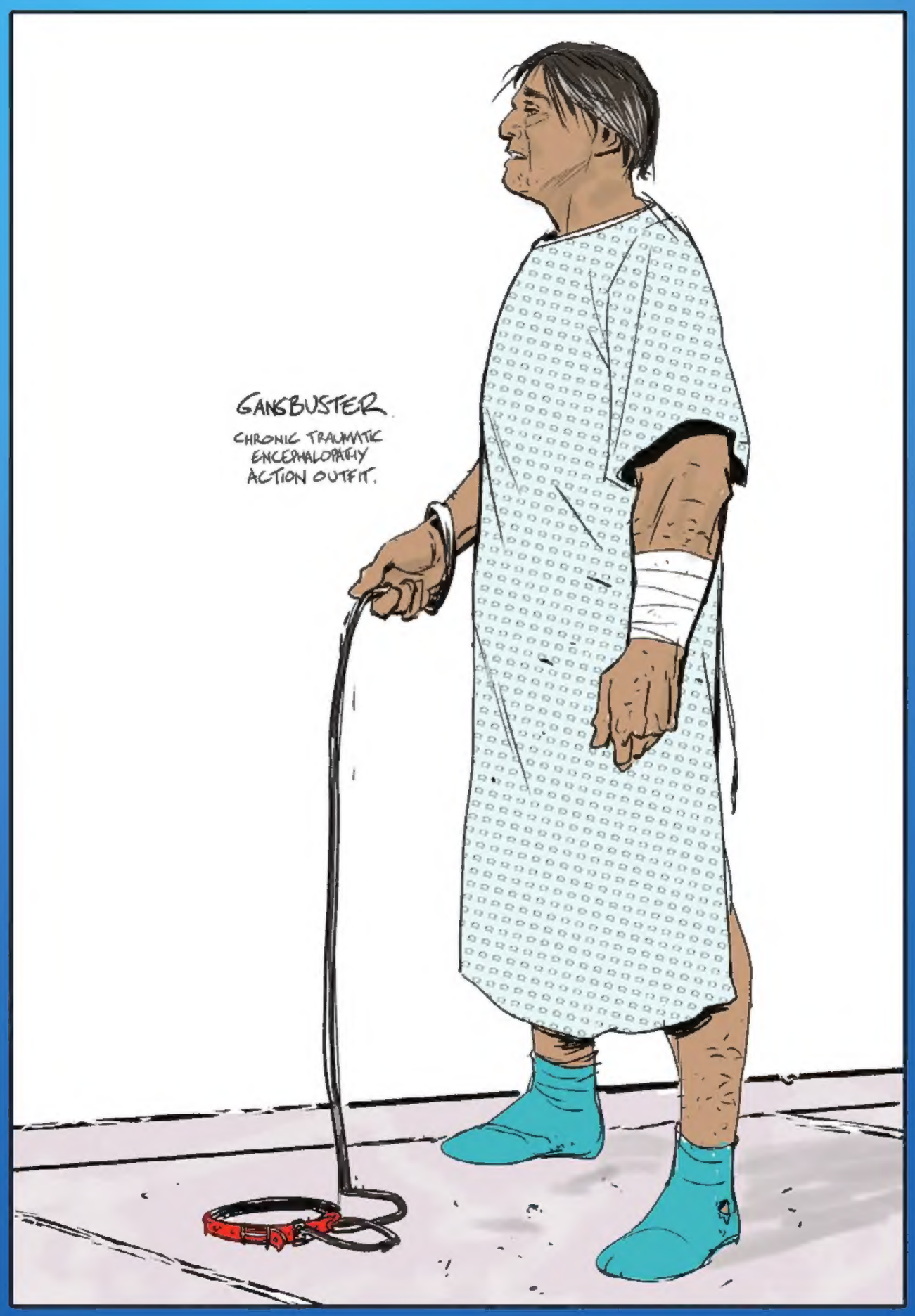
THE END.

One-Star Squadron #1 variant cover
by **Steve Pugh**

CHARACTER DESIGNS BY

STEVE LIEBER

MINUTEMAN


GANGBUSTER
CHRONIC TRAUMATIC ENCEPHALOPATHY ACTION OUTFIT.

WHO YOU GONNA CALL?

ONE-STAR SQUADRON!

Meet DC's superhero team where heroism meets capitalism. This ragtag group of heroes led by Red Tornado is here to provide service with a smile. All you must do is send a request via their on-demand hero app and they'll answer any call. Whether it's a child's birthday party or an alien invasion, no job is too small or too big!

You'll want to invest in this one-of-a-kind collection from Eisner Award winners **Mark Russell** [*The Flintstones, Wonder Twins, Exit Stage Left: The Snagglepuss Chronicles*] and **Steve Lieber** [*Superman's Pal Jimmy Olsen*] that promises a story filled with heart, heroism, and humor. Collecting *One-Star Squadron* #1-6.

SON OF ULTRON

"THIS FAN... THIS MONSTER!"